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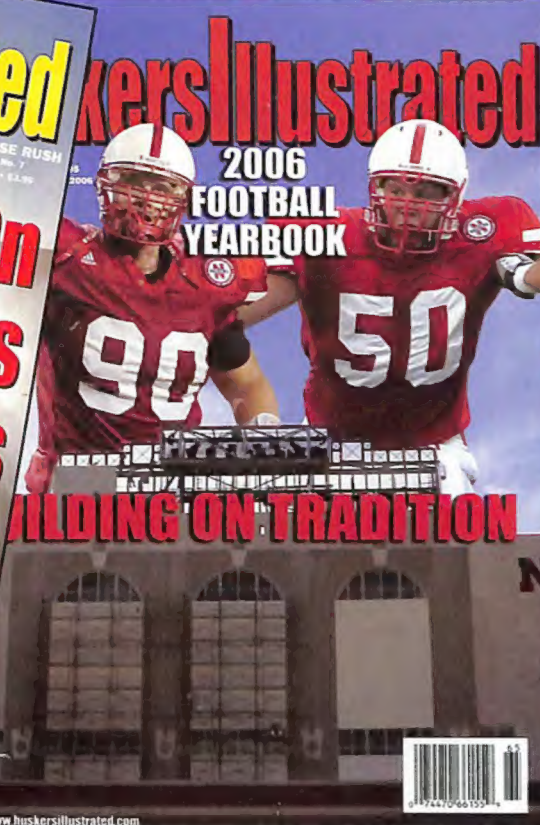
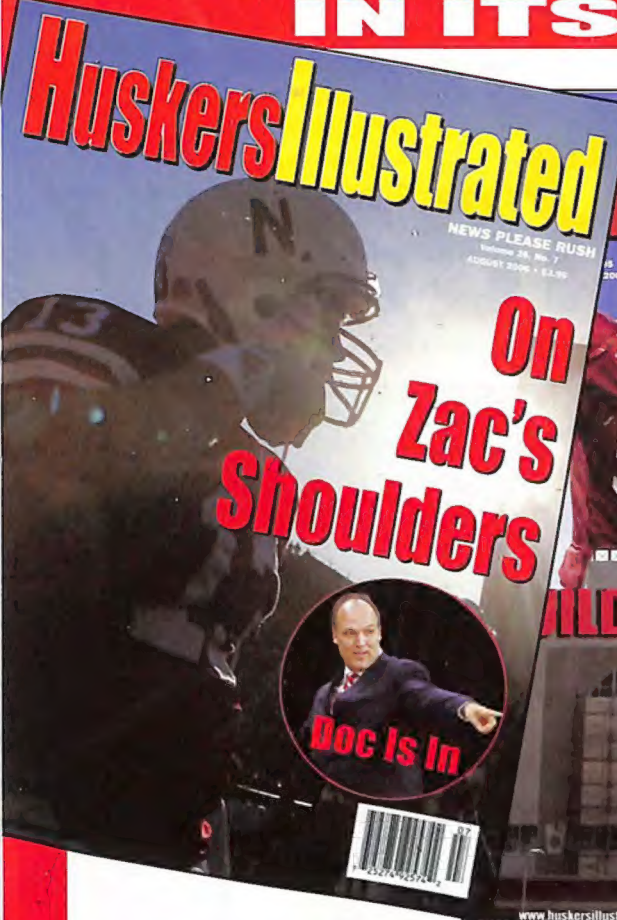
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***... All The Time***



## Busy Time

*In early August, it seemed like one thing after another*



**Brian Hill**

IN SPORTS as well as life, there are stretches like that. Nothing seems to happen for a period of days or even weeks, and then all heck breaks loose.

The latter was certainly the case in early August at Nebraska. As often happens in modern times, some of the events had been rumored or were not surprises. But others were.

It had been known that NU basketball coach Barry Collier was a finalist for the athletic director job at Butler, his alma mater. On Aug. 1, two days after Collier entered the Indianapolis school's hall of fame, came the announcement that he was returning to the place where he played and coached, leaving after six years at Nebraska.

Athletic director Steve Pederson and executive associate AD Marc Boehm moved quickly, and a week later introduced former Texas-El Paso coach Kenneth "Doc" Sadler as the 26th man to lead the NU basketball program.

While that short search was taking place, the Husker football camp was taking its share of the headlines.

Quarterback Harrison Beck, the most talked about member of Nebraska's highly regarded 2005 recruiting class, left the team on the third day of fall camp. Less than a week later, he had been granted a release from his scholarship and was at North Carolina State.

### ON THE COVER

If Nebraska is to return to the conference championship game for the first time since 1999, quarterback Zac Taylor must remain upright and healthy. And Kenneth "Doc" Sadler (inset) was introduced as the new basketball coach at an Aug. 8 news conference. Cover photos by Scott Bruhn.

Two other members of that recruiting class were in the news in the same period.

Cornerback Zack Bowman, one of two five-star recruits in that top-five class and a starter in the final five games last season, suffered a torn ACL on Aug. 5 and is out for the season.

Five days later, I-back Leon Jackson left the team for the second time in four months, this time for good.

You'll find much, much more on those happenings, as well as many others in this issue of Huskers Illustrated.

This edition includes extensive coverage of Nebraska's energetic new basketball coach, including his complete opening statement at the Aug. 8 news conference and an interview with one of the newcomers recruited by the past regime. At presstime, Sadler was busy "recruiting" or actually convincing current Huskers to return. He made a trip to Australia to convince center Aleks

Maric to return for his junior season. Sadler visited Jamel White in Brooklyn with positive results as well.

Speaking of recruiting, part 1 of our series "Recruiting Through the Years" recounts former football assistant Kevin Steele's courtship of Tommie Frazier that led to the Bradenton, Fla., athlete's outstanding career (1992-95) at Nebraska.

Things didn't work out as well for Beck, who brought his impressive credentials to Nebraska from Clearwater, Fla., in 2005.

A year later, Zac Taylor, a late addition to that same recruiting class, is getting ready to begin his second season as the starting quarterback. That stability is a big reason the Huskers are favored to win the Big 12 North Division and possibly continue their move back into national prominence.

If early August is any indication, it's likely to be a long and winding road. ■



## Huskers Illustrated

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## 26 NEW DIRECTION

Nebraska moved quickly to hire former UTEP coach Kenneth "Doc" Sadler to replace Barry Collier.

## 12 FALL CAMP REPORT

While Nebraska welcomed back tight end Matt Herian (11, above) and welcomed several newcomers, the Huskers were forced to deal with the early loss of senior cornerback Zack Bowman and some other departures. *By Mike Babcock*

## 17 2006 ROSTER

## NEXT ISSUE

The Louisiana Tech review/Nicholls State preview edition will be mailed Sept. 5. Check for updates at [huskersillustrated.com](http://huskersillustrated.com).



# 'Pleasant Surprise'

During the Nebraska football team's first day of training camp, one of the officials who regularly work Cornhusker practices suggested that Andy Kadavy might want to buy a lottery ticket, pointing out that the senior linebacker from Seward, Neb., was on a roll of good fortune.

"It's been a great week for me so far," Kadavy said afterward.

The previous Saturday he had been married, and the day before that first practice, at the end of an orientation meeting, coach Bill Callahan had announced he had earned a scholarship. "I kind of felt like I was the only one in the room for a second, just totally shocked," said Kadavy.

"It's the best thing that's happened to me in a while."

Not counting the wedding, of course.

Kadavy left the meeting, went home to tell his wife and then called his mom, who cried tears of joy and told him he should call his grandparents right away and tell them the good news.

"It was a dream come true," he said. "It's amazing."

Kadavy was among three walk-ons put on scholarship for the first time this semester. Safeties Brandon Rigoni and Ben Eisenhart also realized a dream, though "it was never really a huge goal to me," said Eisenhart. "I knew if I worked hard enough, I could get there and get one. But I was never like, 'That's what I'm coming here to get.' I was coming here to play football not get a scholarship.

"I've always played the same. I've played the same way since I was in fifth grade. I just play as hard as I can and see what happens, so I don't think it's going to change the way I play at all."

Even so, "it was a pleasant surprise," Eisenhart said.

In addition, sophomore wide receiver Todd Peterson was placed on football scholarship after counting against the Cornhuskers' NCAA-maximum of 85 with academic aid last season.

The four bring to 16 the total of walk-ons who have earned scholarships since Callahan arrived, including 12 from Nebraska, nine of whom came from Class B schools or smaller.

"That gives credence to the fact that a player can come here, walk on and be rewarded for his efforts," said Callahan. "This should provide motivation for our walk-ons."

Callahan called the three "core special-teams players."

Rigoni was the first to be announced, followed by Kadavy and then Eisenhart. After Kadavy's name was called, "I kind of thought that was it," Eisenhart said. "Then he said my name."

He and Eisenhart "knew Rig's name was going to get called," said Kadavy.

## **Brandon Rigoni 5-6, 185, Sr. Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)**

2006 Nebraska Lifter of the Year  
Academic All-Big 12, first team, 2004, 2005  
Special teams MVP, 2004  
Most improved special teams player, spring 2004

Rigoni immediately earned Callahan's respect for his play on the scout squad as well as on special teams. "He's the heart and soul of our special teams and a great kid," Callahan said. "He has a great attitude; it's infectious, and he's great to be around."

Rigoni has been kind of a spokesman for walk-ons, long an important part of Nebraska's success. Concern that the value of walk-ons has diminished under Callahan is misplaced, according to him. "As a matter of fact, I would hope that the kids around Nebraska that are concerned about that sort of thing would see this and maybe it would give them some hope," said



Rigoni. "I assume that came about because when he cut the size of the team down so much that was the concern, that he was getting rid of the walk-on program. But that wasn't it at all. He was just making it so you had to work harder to be a walk-on. That just got rid of guys that didn't necessarily want to be out there anyway."

As for the day-to-day affect, "I don't think anybody knows exactly who's on (scholarship) and who's not," Rigoni said. "I had a few guys come up to me and say, 'I didn't realize you weren't.'"



## **Andy Kadavy 6-0, 220, Sr. Seward, Neb.**

Defensive scout team player of the year, 2004, 2005

Five-time Big 12 Commissioner's Honor Roll

Kadavy is "hard-nosed, tough and a good guy to build our special teams around," said Callahan. "He has sacrificed a lot at Nebraska. He's had a great story of perseverance."

His wife, Kojic, is from Bosnia and came to Nebraska to compete in track. Her family had never been to the United States until the wedding. "They don't speak any English," Kadavy said.

The two were engaged a year almost to the day of the wedding, which required "a lot of planning," he said. "Once the wedding was over, I didn't know what to do with myself. There was no more planning. Thank God, two-a-days started. The honeymoon is training camp. We knew this was going to happen. Hopefully we'll plan something after a bowl game."

His earning a scholarship was big news in Seward. "I called everybody in my phonebook and told them," he said. "I was super-happy."



## **Ben Eisenhart 5-11, 200, Jr. Culbertson, Neb.**

Big 12 Commissioner's Academic Honor Roll, fall 2004

Eisenhart, who played eight-man football in high school, is "on every special-teams unit. He's upbeat, positive and a very hard worker," Callahan said. "He came up to the offices every day during the summer to watch film on other teams' special-teams units. His diligence to preparation is exemplary."

Eisenhart, Kadavy and Rigoni received a standing ovation from their teammates after Callahan introduced them as having earned scholarships. "Everybody was hugging, patting you on the back. They were happy for you," said Eisenhart. However, "I like to think I had their respect before."

"A scholarship is just kind of a thing on paper, and it's paying for school. But I like to think they had that already, just from how we play on the field, how we take every day."

Eisenhart said he remembered when Joey Robison was put on scholarship a year ago. Robison, who has completed his eligibility, had already bought his book for classes. A scholarship covers the cost of books, however, so Robison took them back and repurchased them.

Fortunately, "Joey kept his receipts," Eisenhart said. He had yet to buy books.

## **WALK-ON FAST FACT**

Coach Bill Callahan's son, Brian, was a walk-on quarterback at UCLA and is now a Bruins graduate assistant.



# Quick Hits

## TOPS IN THE NORTH

The Nebraska football team was a clear-cut favorite to win the Big 12 North Division in a preseason media poll. The Cornhuskers received 21 first-place votes.

Oklahoma was favored to win the South Division, with defending national champion Texas a distant second in first-place votes.

Sooner Coach Bob Stoops subsequently dismissed quarterback Rhett Bomar from the team, however, for violating NCAA rules. The loss of Bomar almost certainly would have influenced the voting.

North		South	
Team (first-place votes)	Pts.	Team (first-place votes)	Pts.
Nebraska (21)	160	Oklahoma (23)	163
Iowa State (5)	128	Texas (5)	144
Colorado (2)	93	Texas Tech	106
Kansas	85	Texas A&M	81
Missouri	82	Oklahoma State	49
Kansas State	40	Baylor	46

The conference championship game is scheduled for Dec. 2 at Kansas City's Arrowhead Stadium. The Cornhuskers' last appearance in the game was in 1999.

## THREE HUSKERS SELECTED

Senior defensive end Adam Carriker, junior middle linebacker Corey McKeon and senior punt returner (and wide receiver) Terrence Nunn were named to the preseason All-Big 12 team. Oklahoma running back Adrian Peterson was picked as the preseason offensive player of the year, and Sooner linebacker Rufus Alexander was picked as the defensive player of the year, with Texas linebacker Sergio Kindle named newcomer of the year.

### Offense

- WR** — Todd Blythe, Iowa State; Jarrett Hicks, Texas Tech
- TE** — Martin Rucker, Missouri
- OL** — Justin Blalock, Texas; Manuel Ramirez, Texas Tech; Kasey Studdard, Texas; Corey Hilliard, Oklahoma State; Mark Fenton (C), Colorado
- QB** — Bret Meyer, Iowa State
- RB** — Adrian Peterson, Oklahoma; Jamaal Charles, Texas
- PK** — Mason Crosby, Colorado
- KR** — DeAndre Jackson, Iowa State

### Defense

- DL** — Adam Carriker, Nebraska; Tim Crowder, Texas; Frank Okam, Texas; Brent Curvey, Oklahoma
- LB** — Corey McKeon, Nebraska; Rufus Alexander, Oklahoma; Thaddeus Washington, Colorado
- DB** — Michael Griffin, Texas; DeAndre Jackson, Iowa State; David Overstreet, Missouri; Aqib Talib, Kansas
- P** — Daniel Sepulveda, Baylor
- PR** — Terrence Nunn, Nebraska

## NATIONALLY SPEAKING

The Cornhuskers were ranked 22nd in the USA Today coaches' preseason Top 25. The preseason ranking was their first in one of the two major polls since 2002. The Associated Press 2006 preseason poll was scheduled to be released on Aug. 19. Ohio State was No. 1 in the coaches' poll, with 28 first-place votes, followed by defending national champion Texas (11 first-place votes). Notre Dame (9) and USC (1) were tied for third, and Oklahoma (11) was fifth.

## SIGNIFICANT LOSS

Early in training camp — three days in, to be exact — senior cornerback Zack Bowman, a returning starter, suffered a season-ending knee injury, creating a void in the secondary.

"It's a tremendous loss for our team, but other guys are stepping up and doing a good job," Callahan said. "He'll be there to help them out and support them, and that's great." Bowman can take a medical redshirt and return next season, which he plans to do. In the wake of his injury, wide receivers Isaiah Fluellen and Tyrell Spain were moved to the secondary.

Among other position changes since last season, sophomore Clayton Sievers was moved from tight end to strongside linebacker.



Zack Bowman

## COMING AND GOING

The surprise departure of sophomore quarterback Harrison Beck drew the most media attention during training camp. Beck, upset with a lack of practice reps, went AWOL, returned home to Clearwater, Fla., was granted a release from his scholarship and headed to North Carolina State. Beck played in two games last season, shedding a redshirt after Zac Taylor was knocked out of the Kansas State game. He finished 1-of-10 passing for 21 yards with one interception. Beck was hampered by a shoulder injury in the spring but dropped weight during the summer and reported for training camp healthy.



Brian Hildebrand

A week after Beck left, another quarterback joined the team, Brian Hildebrand, a transfer from Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut, Calif. Hildebrand, who participated in the prestigious Elite 11 quarterbacks camp during the summer before his senior year in high school in Corona, Calif., began his college career at Oregon State.

Cornhusker assistant Sean Watson recruited Hildebrand at Colorado, and it appeared the 6-foot-2, 200-pound Hildebrand would be headed to Colorado after one season at Mt. SAC. But when Gary Barnett was fired as coach, Hildebrand was available. His position coach at Mt. SAC, former Colorado quarterback Mike Moschetti, contacted Watson to initiate Nebraska's interest.

Hildebrand is immediately eligible and has three seasons of eligibility. He has "a lot of hard work," said Watson. "He's got talent. His work ethic's there. His humility is going to be the key ingredient. If you stay humble, you're willing to learn, and then you'll fight your way through the adversity he's going to face because there's going to be adversity. There's a lot of stuff going on out there that he's not used to."

Hildebrand completed 56-of-99 passes for 791 yards and three touchdowns and five interceptions in five games at Mt. SAC before being sidelined by a torn ligament in his right thumb.

Sophomore Leon Jackson, another member of Beck's highly ranked recruiting class, also left the program, a week into training camp. Jackson, who left the team following spring practice only to return, struggled to settle into a position. He began as a running back, moved to safety and finished his freshman season as a wide receiver on the scout team, before returning to running back. He left the program "of his own volition," Callahan said in a statement. "We appreciate the contributions he has made to this football program, and we wish him the best in the future."

During the summer, Callahan announced that Rodney Picou, an offensive lineman from Moreno Valley, Calif., in the 2005 recruiting class, and Steve Allen, a linebacker from Delray Beach, Fla., by way of Fresno City College in the 2006 recruiting class, would not be on the team because of academics. Three other members of the 2006 recruiting class — wide receiver Maurice Purify, defensive back Rickey Thenarse and defensive tackle Brandon Johnson — weren't able to begin practicing immediately in training camp because of paperwork and, in Johnson's case, academic matters; he was finishing summer school at Compton (Calif.) College. Purify and Thenarse had both joined the team by mid-August.

## NO SURPRISE HERE

For the second consecutive year, the Nebraska volleyball team was the top pick in the CSTV/AVCA Division I preseason poll. The Huskers, who NCAA runners-up last season, received 14 first-place votes, three fewer than Penn State, which was second. Defending national champion Washington was third.

For the 10th consecutive season, the Huskers were the Big 12 coaches' pick to win the conference title, and for the second season in a row, the Huskers' Sarah Pavan was their pick as player of the year. The junior from Kitchener, Ontario, is a two-time All-American. Sophomore outside hitter Jordan Larson joined Pavan on the coaches' preseason all-conference team.

### Preseason All-Big 12

- S** — Ashley Nu'u, Colorado; Michelle Moriarty, Texas
- OPP/S** — Emily Brown, Kansas
- MB** — Erin Boeve, Iowa State; Eliane Santos, Oklahoma; Leticia Armstrong, Texas; Brandy Magee, Texas; Desiree Guilliard-Young, Baylor
- MB/OH** — Christi Hahn, Texas A&M
- OH** — Sarah Pavan, Nebraska; Jordan Larson, Nebraska; Jessica Vander Kooi, Missouri; Dariam Acevedo, Texas ■



## Unrealistic Expectations?

*Beck was among the most written about and discussed players despite playing in just two games*



**Mike  
BABCOCK**

all this stuff," he said. "So you come in and you have a lot of confidence."

The confidence was good. The unrealistic expectations were not. When he found himself not owning the college football world immediately, "it kind of knocks you back a little bit," he said.

At that point, he realized that he needed to be patient. "I think I'm starting to get a hold of the offense now, and with these extra bowl practices, all it can do is help me," Beck said.

He would work hard in the off-season and "just see what happens."

What happened was Beck left Nebraska on the third day of training camp in August. He was missing from practice, raising concerns about his safety, and ended up home in Clearwater, Fla. His unexpected departure from the program was as clandestine as his recruitment was public.

Within a week, he had been granted a release from his scholarship and was at North Carolina State, prompting discussion of the possibility that the 2007 North Carolina State-North Carolina game would match him against another former Cornhusker quarterback, Joe Dailey.

Dailey looks to be North Carolina's starter, after sitting out as a transfer redshirt in 2005.

North Carolina State's current group of quarterbacks also includes wrestler Ryan Goodman, who took a snap or two for Nebraska as a walk-on in coach Bill Callahan's first season. Oh yes, former Cornhusker quarterback Curt Dukes transferred to Duke, though he's no longer playing. And, of course, current quarterback Zac Taylor began his college career at Wake Forest.

So it was probably fitting that Beck would end up at a school in the Athletic Coast Conference. Plus, North Carolina State makes sense, considering Marc Trestman coaches the Wolfpack quarterbacks. Trestman was Callahan's offensive coordinator with the Oakland Raiders.

Curious, and not-so-curious, connections aside, Beck's departure deserves more than passing (no pun intended) mention. And Beck, himself, deserves better than some Nebraska fans have given. Internet message boards were alive with criticism, some mean-spirited, most personal when he left.

HARRISON BECK SPOKE BRIEFLY following a practice in December, just before the Nebraska football team left for San Antonio and the Alamo Bowl game. "I came in as a teenager, a little naïve, thinking I'm going to come in here and own the world with this offense and do whatever I want," he said.

During his recruitment, the coaches were "always talking about how, 'You have to come in and help us win.' You're being fed

Beck was immature, or at least his behavior, at times, seemed to indicate that. But he was only 17-years-old when he began training camp a year ago. During his first official interview, which produced five pages, single-spaced, of tape-recording transcription, he talked of playing the guitar, expecting a drum set for his Sept. 1 birthday and wanting to be like Brett Favre (he was growing a Favre-type beard).

He seemed eager to please, though perhaps a bit eccentric. But then, eccentricity is relative. Most of those interviewing him were at least twice his age, if not more. "It's pretty cool if you guys want to interview a guy like me because I play football," he told them. "That's all I do, you know what I'm saying? It's pretty cool that you find me somewhat interesting. So thank you. I appreciate it."

By spring practice, Beck had little to do with reporters and didn't appreciate the attention. His name was on the interview-request list before training camp ever began. After two practices of silence, he was gone. Nebraska moved on, of course, never missing a beat. In fact, the Cornhuskers were already in the process of bringing in another quarterback to add to the competition, junior college transfer Brian Hildebrand, whose impending arrival might have contributed to Beck's decision to leave.

Quotes from Beck's mom, some disparaging of Zac Taylor, may have closed the door on a possible return. The subsequent soap opera kept Husker Web sites buzzing for days.

Beck apparently didn't have the respect of some of his older teammates, maybe many of them. But that was a team matter, not something those on the outside should have criticized. By all accounts, he was focused in the off-season, dropping weight and working to come back from the shoulder injury that limited him during the spring. He was

more mature, and as such, better prepared to compete for the job that likely would have been his to lose a season from now.

"Future In His Hands" a newspaper headline said when Beck came to Lincoln for Callahan's elite quarterback academy during the summer before his senior season in high school. "Boy Wonder" said another headline a week before he signed a letter of intent with the Cornhuskers.

Beck was among the most written about and discussed players during Callahan's tenure as coach and yet he played in just two games, throwing 10 passes, only one of which was complete. He didn't meet expectations, but he probably couldn't have, short of winning the Heisman Trophy.

He is starting anew at North Carolina State. Nebraska fans should hope he succeeds. They owe him that for shouldering the burden of their imagination for more than two years. ■



**Harrison Beck played  
in two games and  
completed one pass.**

*Mike Babcock is a former sports columnist for the Lincoln Journal Star. He has covered Nebraska football for more than 25 years. Mike can be reached at MBABCOCK1@neb.rr.com or P.O. Box 6782, Lincoln, NE 68506.*



## Spreading It Out

**Big 12 Conference offenses continue to go to the air**



**Curt McKEEVER**

COLORADO COACH DAN HAWKINS made his living at Boise State running a wide-gapped offense, so you don't really have to guess whether the Buffaloes will be chucking the ball around Folsom Field this fall.

At Kansas State, it's also a safe bet new coach Ron Prince will take advantage of the dual-threat capabilities of freshman quarterback Josh Freeman.

Last year, Missouri gave Brad Smith more room to operate with regular use of three- and four-wide receiver sets.

Nebraska has gone West Coast.

Texas Tech has its Air Raid offshoot.

Still want to be a defensive coordinators in the Big 12 Conference? Better get out your spread sheet.

This year, you can add Baylor to the list of teams in the league that are looking for a basketball-on-grass chess match.

Coach Guy Morriss hired an offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach who turned West Texas A&M into the top passing team in NCAA Division II last season. He also added an offensive graduate assistant who spent the last three seasons learning from Tech's Mike Leach.

While Morriss still looks like the rugged NFL offensive lineman who might prefer to battle it out in the trenches, he also got well-versed in the spread attack when he and Leach were assistants for Hal Mumme at Valdosta State.

"Right now, it's a system, I think, that will level the field for us much like it's done for Texas Tech," Morriss said, "because it's a system you can operate and be successful with, without having the ready-made player coming out of high school that maybe Texas and Oklahoma are getting.

"Hopefully, we'll win enough games that we become very attractive to the top players in the state of Texas, and we get better athletes each year. The better athletes you've got, the more you can do and maybe the more traditional you can become. . . . But I think this offense will help us for the next couple of years."

While Leach's innovative passing system that's allowed Tech to lead the nation in total offense the last three years relies primarily on one-back sets, Morriss sees Baylor sticking with two. After all, there are times in games, and areas on the field when offenses need to knock people off the ball.

Look at Oklahoma. The Sooners might have been forced to go to more of a short-game spread attack suited for Paul Thompson, who was thrust behind center after Rhett Bomar was kicked off the team. But you know no one will forget about giving Adrian Peterson plenty of touches.

Peterson, by the way, was the only running back brought to the Big 12 media sessions held in Kansas City, Mo., in late July. That's just another example of the ongoing shift in Big 12 teams' offensive styles.

"The last time the game of football took it to this level was the single wing," Prince said. "The option was one thing, but (in) the single wing, essentially, the quarterback was the threat. He was

the dual-threat player, and he was the player that really won games for you. I think you can see last year in the title game, the team that (won) had a player who was an unbelievable dual threat."

Most of us would agree that without Vince Young, Texas doesn't beat Southern Cal. And maybe, the Longhorns don't even reach the Rose Bowl.

Teams running multiple-receiver sets who have a mobile, play-making quarterback "basically are playing with 12 people on the field," Prince said. "If you don't have enough defensive backs to cover those wide receivers all across the field, and if you don't employ the right tactics while you're chasing those people, then the quarterback can be running down the field because they've been able to destroy the underneath integrity of the defense."

Morriss is sold on his new system because of its relative ease to install. "It's about knowing where to go with the football," he said. "If you've got some speed, you can always run away from man coverage. If somebody is going to play in the zone, just find a hole and get in it and the quarterback is going to find you and get you the football.

"I don't think you can take bits and pieces of it and plug it into a traditional offense, though. It's a system that you have to commit to. You have to be willing to chuck the ball 50 and 60 times a game. And a lot of coaches are not willing to do that. They just don't feel that good about the passing game."

Usually, those coaches end up having different thoughts about the spread after facing such an attack.

"A lot of motion, a lot of formations — it looks like a lot," Morriss said. "It's hard to implement (defensively) in two days of preparation before Saturday.

Prince agrees.

To try and disrupt such offenses requires a strong pass rush, linebackers who can match up against the quarterback and defensive backs that can run with wide receivers.

"Really, our focus is more on how to defend it than trying to emulate it," Prince said. "What it's allowed (is) greater parity. There's a lot of programs (that) have really made themselves fixtures in the top 25 now, because they've had the opportunity to put this kind of system in place. I think a lot of people are still trying to figure out the answers to defending it."

Nebraska coach Bill Callahan noted how defensive coordinator Kevin Cosgrove was forced to adjust his schemes after joining the Huskers from Wisconsin.

"In styles, in schematics, it was drastically different (in the Big 12) than what it was in the Big Ten," Callahan said.

Obviously, Leach is enjoying the current trend. But he maintains it's far from a reinvention of the wheel.

"One way or the other, everybody is changing offenses all the time," he said. "I'm kind of looking forward to seeing the wish-bone show up in some other conference. You kind of wonder why anybody ever got rid of it." ■



**Mike Leach's Red Raiders have led the nation in total offense.**

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## Early Preview

**Nebraska players get glimpse of where they hope to be on Dec. 2**



**Terry DOUGLASS**

FOR THE NEBRASKA CONTINGENT that traveled to this year's Big 12 Conference football media days, there was one rather significant pit stop.

On their way to press conferences at a Kansas City hotel, coach Bill Callahan and seniors Zac Taylor, Adam Carriker and Zackary Bowman carved out a little time to pay a visit to Arrowhead Stadium — site of this year's Big 12 Championship game on Dec. 2. While Callahan wasn't the first Big 12 coach to employ the motivational tactic, the message was clear: Lofty expectations have returned.

"It's our goal to be back there in December, so it gives you a chance to kind of dream the whole season what it would be like, playing at Arrowhead," Taylor said. "Hopefully we can be back there. It just gives us something to look forward to."

Nebraska hasn't appeared in the Big 12 title game since winning it in 1999. The Huskers, who were picked to win the North Division in each of the league's first six years of existence, have received the preseason nod again for the first time since 2001.

Hence the detour to Arrowhead.

"We wanted to kind of get a visual," said Carriker, a preseason All-Big 12 defensive end. "We tried to see the stadium full of people and imagine that on a December night."

"We took some pictures, and we're definitely going to put that up for the team to see."

Question is: Is Nebraska ready to wear the favorite's tag?

"We've still got a lot of work to do, but I think we've got as much talent as anyone else, and we've got as good of coaches as anybody else," said Taylor, who passed for 2,653 yards and 19 touchdowns last season. "We're definitely going to have our opportunities."

The return of eight offensive starters and seven more on defense is certainly one source of optimism in Husker Nation. But possibly the biggest buzz-builder is Nebraska's three-game winning streak to close the season, capped by a 32-28 Alamo Bowl win over Michigan.

"Beating a team like Michigan on national television is big for your confidence and very big for your momentum," Carriker said. "It just kind of gets you going in the offseason. It follows you in your workouts and your practices."

With Callahan now in his third season at Nebraska and plenty of experience back from last year's Alamo Bowl championship team, senior defensive end Jay Moore said there's an air of anticipation this fall.

"Last night, I was just laying in bed thinking of the opportunity that we have this year and thinking that it all starts today," Moore said prior to the team's first practice on Aug. 3. "There's a little bit of (eagerness) and a little bit of nervousness."

Those feelings likely come from trying to live up to the expectations bestowed on the Huskers, who are the consensus pick to win the Big 12's North Division. Following a 5-6 record in 2004, Nebraska rebounded to go 8-4 last year and takes a three-game winning streak into its season opener.

"We've got tons of talent," Moore said. "We've got an opportunity to really go out and get this program back to where it could be."

"If we have a good training camp, there's no telling what could happen this season."

Like win a division title? Maybe more?

"Our goal is always to win the national championship and the conference championship and the Big 12 North Division," said Callahan, 13-10 in his first two seasons at Nebraska. "I don't know when it's going to happen, but that's our goal. That's what we zero in on. How that manifests itself, we'll have to wait and see."

Callahan's staff and the Nebraska players have seemingly now forged a bond that time simply didn't allow before, especially in his debut season. The players know what to expect from their coaches, as well as what's expected from them.

"The main thing I notice with Coach Callahan and his whole staff is how comfortable everyone is," Moore said. "His first year and even last year a little bit, guys were kind of walking on eggshells, afraid to make certain remarks or moves, just because we didn't know what his expectations where (and) how he was going to react."

"This year, everyone can joke around with the coaches. Everyone just feels so much more relaxed."

The feelings in Nebraska's program are a stark contrast from last November when the Huskers suffered a 40-15 defeat at Kansas. The loss was the first for NU against the Jayhawks since 1968.

After that, players said that the team's attitude changed. Nebraska used a late field goal to pull out a 27-25 win over Kansas State at home and then shocked Colorado 30-3 in the regular-season finale at Boulder, setting the stage for the Alamo Bowl win.

The result was a confidence boost that has stuck with Nebraska through the summer months.

"We don't talk about that just because we have the 'N' on our helmet that all of the sudden, magic is going to happen," Callahan said. "They feed off of each other. Their confidence comes from their preparation."

It certainly doesn't come from reading preseason prognostications.

"I don't think anybody else really cares in the conference," Callahan said of Nebraska being picked to win the North. "I think it's great, I feel that it's a compliment, but it's what we do with it and how we measure ourselves at the end."

"That's really the only thing that matters for us."

Taylor and his teammates are well aware of all the expectations. "We have pretty high expectations for ourselves as well," Taylor said. "We're putting a lot of pressure on ourselves to be pretty good."

"We're not just going to take everything for granted — the fact that people are hyping us up to be this great team — we're still working really hard and trying not to let that affect us." ■



**Arrowhead Stadium is the site of the Big 12 title game.**

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# Secondary Distraction

***Cornerback Bowman 'a big loss,'  
but others ready to step up***

**BY MIKE BABCOCK**

**PHOTOS BY SCOTT BRUHN**

**A**lthough the exit of sophomore quarterback Harrison Beck drew most of headlines early in the Nebraska football team's training camp, a much more significant event occurred during the third practice. Senior cornerback Zack Bowman suffered a torn ACL in a one-on-one coverage drill.

An MRI verified fears he would be lost for the season.

The Cornhuskers already were thin in experience at cornerback. Bowman and Cortney Grixby were the only returning starters, because Tierre Green had moved to safety in spring practice. And cornerback is "the toughest position on the team to develop," according to coach Bill Callahan.

A cornerback plays on an island, in man-to-man and bump-and-run coverage. At 6-foot-2 and 195 pounds, Bowman had the size to match up with the big receivers in the conference.


"Zack was a big loss for us," Grixby said the final week of training camp. "But we've got players that are stepping up, players that are going to be able to step up and make big plays for us."

Andre Jones was among those to whom Grixby was referring. Like Bowman, Jones transferred from junior college, where he earned All-America recognition and a five-star rating from Rivals.com. But "I'm not here to be like Zack. I'm here to set my own tempo," said Jones.

"Zack was his own player, and he was a great player."

Cortney Grixby (2) and Zack Bowman celebrate after Bowman's interception against Baylor last season.





Cornerback is  
"the toughest  
position on the  
team to develop."

— NU coach Bill Callahan

Even so, Bowman went through a period of adjustment, beginning his first season at Nebraska as the No. 1 nickel back before finally stepping into the starting lineup against Oklahoma. He finished with 27 tackles, a team-high 14 pass break-ups and two interceptions, to tie for second.

"He was once what I am right now," Jones said. "He progressed. He got better."

Jones was among those needing to do the same, as was junior Titus Brothers.

But "we're just fine," said Grixby. "We're pulling through."

Grixby and weakside linebacker Steve Octavien weren't strangers to adversity, either. Grixby suffered what Callahan called a sprained right thumb and was wearing a cast at practice the third week of training camp, and Octavien was sidelined after having his appendix removed early that week.

Before the appendectomy, Octavien was having an outstanding training camp, Callahan said. Octavien was expected to be back in action by the opener against Louisiana Tech.

The junior from Naples, Fla., is eager to play, after missing last season because of a leg injury suffered early in the

first quarter of the opening game against Maine. "I don't feel any pressure," he said on the first day of training camp. "I don't buy into the pressure. I'm just out to play."

That Nebraska is favored to win the Big 12's North Division is in large part because of the defense, which wants to establish a reputation for nastiness, according to Grixby. And it can be "very, very nasty," he said. "I think the talent and our ability as a whole defense

will speak for itself."

Nastiness shouldn't be confused with dirty play. "We just want to be physical. We want to out-physical every team that we line up against," Grixby said. "When teams look on film and see a defense that's physical, a defense that's disciplined and a defense that just sticks to their assignments and does their job, it can get intimidating. The discipline, that's probably the most important part of it."

"Everyone has to be disciplined in their assignments, then the defense will be good."

Octavien echoed Grixby. The defense expects to be "dominant, nasty, mean," he said. "We want to make sure that when we got on the field, everybody knows, 'Man, we're about to get punished, every play.' We want to play like the old Nebraska teams, like the '95 team if not even

## FEATURE STORY



better."

Despite his one-quarter first season at Nebraska, Octavien is among five linebackers who have started at least one game for the Cornhuskers. The others, of course, are Corey McKeon, Stewart Bradley, Bo Ruud and Lance Brandenburgh. Bradley and Ruud also are coming back from injury.

"We're so talented at the linebackers," Grixby said. "We've got a lot of playmakers."

The defense also is stocked at end, with returning starters Adam Carriker and Jay Moore, as well as Barry Turner, who earned freshman All-America recognition, primarily as

a pass rusher.

The heart of the defense, however, is the line, according to Ola Dagunduro. "All day, man; it's a family thing," he said. The linebackers are "supposed to say that. But in actual fact, it's the d-line. It starts up front." The linebackers "wouldn't have the freedom" to make plays otherwise.

As a nose tackle, Dagunduro is biased. And compared to the linebackers and defensive ends, the defensive line is inexperienced. Dagunduro was in the regular rotation last season, and Barry Cryer played primarily in pass-rush situations. But the tackles will be fine,

Dagunduro said. "We expect a lot out of ourselves, so the pressure from outside really doesn't matter to us."

"We're pressuring ourselves more than anybody outside can pressure us. When they say we have to show ourselves, I feel like we will. We'll prove ourselves. Time will tell."

The safeties have to prove themselves as well. Andrew Shanle and Tierre Green are inexperienced at the position, with youngsters behind them, including Major Culbert and Rickey Thenarse.

The secondary has talent, however. "We have some guys who are going to come in and help us out," said Grixby. "I'm just trying to get them up to speed on the knowledge of what we know, learning the system. My biggest advice to them is: Mistakes will be made." That has to be understood.

Jones understands. He has the maturity not only of a season at Fresno (Calif.) City College but also a season at Kentucky, cut short by injury that required the insertion of a rod in a shin.

Nebraska football is different from Kentucky football, however. In a sense, "it's almost like being a freshman all over again because you're learning different techniques, schemes," said Jones. "It's tough at times, but the JC route was the best move for me. It's really exciting to be somewhere and finally be back on my feet. I've been given a second chance and I'm trying to make the best of it."

Bowman picked him up at the airport when he arrived in Lincoln. "Ever since then, me and Zack have been pretty close. I'm just glad he was there for me, to kind of give me that up-lifting."

"Zack, he was a good leader to me so I followed him."

But Jones quickly found himself on his own, with Bowman encouraging from the sideline.

After Bowman suffered the knee injury, "we prayed" together, Jones said, and "he seemed a lot better after that. I told him everything happens for a reason. God has a plan for him just as well."

That Nebraska's plan won't include Bowman this season was big news in training camp, maybe the biggest, depending on what happened in the final days. ■



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Senior Zac Taylor (13) returns to lead the offense. His backups include sophomore Joe Ganz (12) and junior college transfer Brian Hildebrand (8, far right), a late addition to fall camp.

## STILL LEARNING

Defense is a key factor in Nebraska's being favored to win the Big 12's North Division. But if the Cornhuskers are to return to the conference championship game for the first time since 1999, quarterback Zac Taylor must remain up-right and healthy. No great insight there.

The senior from Norman, Okla., played a key role in last season's 8-4 record and Alamo Bowl victory against Michigan. And he showed in training camp he hadn't become complacent.

"Zac's progress has been accelerated greatly," coach Bill Callahan said midway through the final week. "We're really pleased with where he's at and, hopefully, where we can take him."

Taylor is committed to Callahan's complicated offensive system, a firm believer in a system he continues to learn but will never master. Two years simply aren't sufficient.

"I do kind of say to people, 'Once quarterbacks really get recruited in this system as freshmen and they get to go through four or five years, it's really going to take off,'" said Taylor. "I wish I could have another year or two and really get this offense down. There's still a lot of stuff I've got to learn. It's going to be neat to watch kids they recruit just come through this offense."

Callahan and quarterbacks coach Jay Norvell "give me a tip every day," Taylor said. "The more you run plays, the better you get a feel for them. They (the coaches) may kind of tell you a little bit more about how the play is supposed to work, and every day you just learn a little bit more."

## MOVING AROUND

The offensive line made maximum use of training camp, with coach Dennis Wagner continuing to work different combinations to find just the right mix. About the only certainty was center, where two-year senior starter Kurt Mann anchors the interior. Sophomore Matt Slauson began training camp at right guard, after playing tackle as a true freshman and throughout spring practice. But on the Tuesday before classes began, Slauson

returned to right tackle, a pleasant surprise. "I was like, 'All right, I get moved to guard. I get comfortable with guard, sort of, then I'm moving back to tackle,'" he said. "But the first day, it was just like riding a bike. I was like, 'Man, this is kind of nice.' But we'll see."

At that point, Lydon Murtha and Chris Patrick were alternating at left tackle, Greg Austin and Andy Christensen were alternating at left guard, Mike Huff and Jacob Hickman were alternating at right guard and newcomer Carl Nicks, a junior college transfer, was alternating with Slauson.

By now that might have changed. Stay tuned.

"We're just trying to feel out everybody's strengths," said Slauson.



Kenny Wilson, a junior college teammate of Zac Taylor at Butler County (Kan.), joined the committee at I-back.

## I-BACK COMMITTEE

Running backs coach Randy Jordan was trying to feel out everybody's strengths at I-back and it appeared the position might be handled by a committee of four: sophomores Marlon Lucky and Cody Glenn and juniors Brandon Jackson and Kenny Wilson, a junior college transfer.

All four "want to be the guy, but we pretty much know how it's going to be," Glenn said, adding that Jordan "made it quite clear that's how it's going to be until he says something different."

"Everybody knows their role. Everybody does what they're supposed to do. Everybody has to be ready to go, paying attention, know what's going on."

## HERIAN'S HEALTH

Tight end Matt Herian wasn't available for interviews until well into training camp. The soft-spoken senior from Pierce, Neb., is back after missing all of last season and the last three games of the 2004 season because of a broken leg that required two surgeries. He fielded the standard questions with good natured tolerance. "He knows it's not going to be like flipping a light switch and everything's back the way it was," offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Jay Norvell said. "The thing he realizes, he hasn't played football in a long time, two-a-days, banging every day and being in physical situations." ■





Defensive coordinator Kevin Cosgrove (with football) leads his charges through a drill (above), while coach Bill Callahan (below) shares a laugh with linebacker Lance Brandenburg (40) and defensive end Zach Potter (right).





# 2006 ROSTER

Source: Huskers.com

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Hometown (school)
7	Adams, Jordan	S	6-2	205	Jr.	Santee, Calif. (Grossmont, Calif., College)
93	Alegria, Jordan	PK	6-1	210	RFr.	North Platte, Neb.
95	Allen, Pierre	DE	6-5	225	Fr.	Denver, Colo. (Jefferson)
65	Austin, Greg	OL	6-1	295	Sr.	Cypress, Texas (Cy-Fairbanks)
66	Barrett, Cruz	OL	6-4	320	Fr.	Daytona Beach, Fla. (Mainland)
52	Benzel, Bryan	LS	6-2	260	RFr.	Alliance, Neb.
14	Bowman, Zackary	CB	6-2	195	Sr.	Anchorage, Alaska (Bartlett/ N.M. Military Institute)
34	Bradley, Stewart	LB	6-4	250	Sr.	Salt Lake City, Utah (Highland)
40	Brandenburgh, Lance	LB	6-1	230	Jr.	Overland Park, Kan. (Aquinas)
1	Brooks, Chris	WR	6-2	200	So.	St. Louis, Mo. (Hazelwood E.)
21	Brothers, Titus	SS	5-11	195	Jr.	San Antonio, Texas (Judson)
59	Byford, Brett	OL	6-3	300	Jr.	Hartselle, Ala.
82	Cammack, Wes	WR	5-11	185	RFr.	DeWitt, Neb. (Tri County)
90	Carriker, Adam	DE	6-6	295	Sr.	Kennewick, Wash. (Kennewick)
62	Christensen, Andy	OL	6-3	300	So.	Bennington, Neb.
29	Congdon, Jordan	PK	5-11	175	So.	San Diego, Calif. (St. Augustine)
45	Covey, Nick	LB	6-2	235	RFr.	Glendale, Ariz. (Mount. Ridge)
94	Cryer, Barry	DL	6-2	280	Sr.	Marrero, La. (John Ehret/ Dodge City, Kan., CC)
6	Culbert, Major	DB	5-11	198	Fr.	Harbor City, Calif. (Narbonne)
54	Dagunduro, Ola	DL	6-2	300	Sr.	Inglewood, Calif. (Compton, Calif., CC)
15	Davis, Beau	QB	6-4	185	So.	Venice, Calif.
52	Dillard, Phillip	LB	6-1	255	So.	Tulsa, Okla. (Jenks)
46	Eisenhart, Ben	DB	5-11	200	Jr.	Culbertson, Neb.
26	Erickson, Dan	S	6-1	195	Jr.	Omaha, Neb. (Papio-LaVista)
47	Farino, Paul	FB	6-0	270	RFr.	East Meadow, N.Y. (Kellenberg)
28	Fuellen, Isaiah	DB	6-0	190	Sr.	Ramstein, Germany (Ramstein American)
27	Ford, Ryan	DB	5-11	170	Fr.	Winfield, Ala.
12	Ganz, Joe	QB	6-1	200	So.	Palos Heights, Ill. (Stagg)
39	Glassman, Dan	TE	6-4	245	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Creighton Prep)
34	Glenn, Cody	IB	6-0	230	So.	Rusk, Texas (Rusk)
30	Green, Tierre	S	6-1	200	Jr.	Omaha, Neb. (Benson)
	Grier, Tim	DB	6-1	183	Fr.	Hiram, Ga.
2	Grixby, Cortney	CB	5-9	170	Jr.	Omaha, Neb. (Central)
75	Haines, Victory	OL	6-7	290	Jr.	Logan, Utah (Snow, Utah, College)
7	Hardy, Frantz	WR	6-1	180	Jr.	Miami, Fla. (Washington/ Butler County, Kan., CC)
80	Harvey, David	DE	6-4	245	RFr.	La Plata, Md. (McDonough)
	Henery, Alex	P	6-3	190	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Burke)
11	Herian, Matt	TE	6-5	245	Sr.	Pierce, Neb.
67	Hickman, Jacob	OL	6-4	280	Fr.	Bakersfield, Calif. (Centennial)
8	Hildebrand, Brian	QB	6-2	205	So.	Corona, Calif. (Mt. San Antonio, Calif., CC)
86	Hill, Sean	TE	6-3	250	Jr.	Lisle, Ill. (Naperville North)
4	Holt, Menelik	WR	6-4	215	Fr.	San Diego, Calif. (St. Augustine)
61	Huff, Mike	OL	6-4	305	So.	Ralston, Neb.
32	Jackson, Brandon	IB	5-11	210	Jr.	Horn Lake, Miss.
91	Jensen, Seth	DT	6-3	275	Fr.	Fort Morgan, Colo.
96	Johnson, Brandon	DT	6-3	315	Jr.	Chicago, Ill. (Compton, Calif., CC)
25	Jones, Andre	DB	6-0	195	Jr.	Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. (Fresno City, Calif., CC)
73	Jones, D.J.	OL	6-5	300	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Central)
47	Kadavy, Andy	LB	6-0	220	Sr.	Seward, Neb.
92	Kelly, Lane	LS	6-4	270	Sr.	Omaha, Neb. (Creighton Prep)
19	Kester, Tyler	P	6-1	200	Jr.	Clearwater, Neb.
40	Koehler, Colton	FB	6-1	225	Fr.	Harvard, Neb.
36	Lawson, Thomas	RB	6-0	230	So.	Parker, Colo. (Ponderosa)
74	Lingenfelter, Newton	OL	6-5	280	Sr.	Plainview, Neb.
20	Lucky, Marlon	IB	6-0	210	So.	North Hollywood, Calif.
89	Luhrs, Kevin	DE	6-1	260	Jr.	Omaha, Neb. (Creighton Prep)
	Makovicka, Justin	FB	6-1	225	Fr.	Brainard, Neb. (East Butler)
50	Mann, Kurt	OL	6-4	290	Sr.	Grand Island, Neb.
63	Martin, Ben	DE	6-4	265	Fr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Southwest)
55	McBride, Nathan	LS	6-1	205	RFr.	Scottsdale, Ariz. (Chaparral)
13	McKeon, Corey	LB	6-1	225	Jr.	Naperville, Ill. (North)
44	McNeill, Mike	TE	6-4	215	Fr.	Kirkwood, Mo.
58	Moore, Dontrell	LB	6-2	240	Sr.	Thibodaux, La. (Coffeyville, Kan., CC)
44	Moore, Jay	DE	6-4	280	Sr.	Elkhorn, Neb.
	Moore, Kyle	LB	6-1	208	Fr.	Elkhorn, Neb.
81	Mueller, Josh	TE	6-5	265	Jr.	Columbus, Neb. (Lakeview)
76	Murtha, Lydon	OL	6-7	315	So.	Hutchinson, Minn.
77	Nicks, Carl	OL	6-5	325	Jr.	Salinas, Calif. (Hartnell, Calif., JC)
83	Nunn, Terrence	WR	6-0	185	Jr.	Houston, Texas (Cypress Falls)
33	O'Hanlon, Matt	SS	5-11	200	So.	Bellevue, Neb. (Bellevue East)
82	O'Leary, T.J.	LS	6-1	245	So.	Omaha, Neb. (Millard North/ New Mexico State)
50	O'Shea, Mark	LB	5-11	235	Sr.	Dallas, Texas (Jesuit Prep)
15	Octavien, Steve	LB	6-0	240	Jr.	Naples, Fla. (Lely/ William R. Harper, Ill., College)
45	Otto, Will	FB	5-11	235	Sr.	Fullerton, Calif. (Troy/ Fullerton College)
78	Pasteur, Brock	OL	6-6	290	Jr.	Orlando, Fla. (University/ Mesabi Range, Minn., CC)
54	Patrick, Chris	OL	6-4	290	Jr.	Ithaca, Mich.
17	Peterson, Todd	WR	6-4	210	So.	Grand Island, Neb. (Cent. Cath.)
85	Phillips, J.B.	TE	6-3	245	Jr.	Colleyville, Texas (Heritage)
69	Picou, Jordan	OL	6-2	300	Jr.	Rialto, Calif. (Eisenhower/ Mt. San Antonio, Calif., CC)
98	Potter, Zach	DE	6-7	280	So.	Omaha, Neb. (Creighton Prep)
86	Poulosky, Andy	DE	6-2	260	Jr.	Ponca, Neb.
16	Purify, Maurice	WR	6-4	210	Jr.	Eureka, Calif. (San Francisco City College)
85	Rice, Thomas	DE	6-1	240	Jr.	Lincoln, Neb. (East)
24	Rigoni, Brandon	FS	5-6	185	Sr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
55	Roark, Craig	DL	6-2	295	RFr.	Ada, Okla.
84	Rucker, Xavier	WR	5-6	160	Fr.	Minneapolis, Minn. (Breck)
51	Ruud, Bo	LB	6-3	235	Jr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
48	Sand, Andy	FB	6-2	225	Jr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
42	Senske, Matt	FB	6-3	235	Jr.	Bellevue, Neb. (Bellevue East)
8	Shanle, Andrew	S	6-1	210	Sr.	St. Edward, Neb.
88	Sievers, Clayton	LB	6-4	240	So.	Elkhorn, Neb.
70	Slauson, Matt	OL	6-5	335	So.	Colorado Springs, Colo. (Air Force Prep)
18	Spain, Tyrell	DB	6-3	190	Jr.	San Diego, Calif. (Hoover/ Mesa, Ariz., College)
43	Steinkuhler, Ty	DE	6-3	280	So.	Lincoln, Neb. (Southwest)
93	Suh, Ndamukong	DL	6-4	315	So.	Portland, Ore. (Grant)
84	Sullivan, Tony	DE	6-3	230	Jr.	Wahoo, Neb. (Neumann)
87	Swift, Nate	WR	6-2	195	So.	Hutchinson, Minn.
13	Taylor, Zac	QB	6-2	210	Sr.	Norman, Okla./ (Butler County, Kan., CC)
89	Teafatiller, Hunter	TE	6-3	220	So.	Kingsburg, Calif. (San Joaquin)
4	Thenarse, Ricky	DB	6-0	185	Fr.	Los Angeles, Calif. (Jordan)
97	Titchener, Dan	P	6-0	200	So.	Cheyenne, Wyo. (East)
41	Todd, Dane	FB	5-11	235	Sr.	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
10	Tomerlin, Justin	TE	6-6	265	So.	San Clemente, Calif. (Butler County, Kan., CC)
99	Turner, Barry	DL	6-3	250	So.	Antioch, Tenn. (Brentwood Acad.)
98	Wesch, Jake	PK	6-1	200	So.	North Bend, Neb.
22	West, Anthony	DB	6-0	195	Fr.	San Diego, Calif. (Point Loma)
68	Williams, Keith	OL	6-5	310	Fr.	Florissant, Mo. (McClure North)
28	Wilson, Bryan	CB	6-1	200	Jr.	Granada Hills, Calif. (Pierce, Calif., College)
27	Wilson, Kenny	IB	6-0	220	Jr.	Liberal, Kan. (Butler County, Kan., CC)
53	Wortman, Tyler	LB	6-3	230	So.	Grand Island, Neb. (Cent. Cath.)
23	Young, Corey	DB	6-0	195	Fr.	Omaha, Neb. (Millard North)
	Young, Dreu	TE	6-5	210	Fr.	Cozad, Neb.



# 2006 SCHEDULE

(2005 record in parentheses)

- 1 Sept. 2 Louisiana Tech (7-4), 2:30 p.m., FSN
- 2 Sept. 9 Nicholls State (6-4), TBA
- 3 Sept. 16 @USC (12-1), 7 p.m., ABC
- 4 Sept. 23 Troy (4-7), TBA
- 5 Sept. 30 Kansas (7-5), TBA
- 6 Oct. 7 @Iowa State (7-5), TBA
- 7 Oct. 14 @Kansas State (5-6), TBA
- 8 Oct. 21 Texas (13-0), TBA
- 9 Oct. 28 @Oklahoma State (4-7), TBA
- 10 Nov. 4 Missouri (7-5), TBA (Homecoming)
- 11 Nov. 11 @Texas A&M (5-6), TBA
- 12 Nov. 24 Colorado (7-6), 2:30 p.m., ABC
- Dec. 2 Big 12 Championship  
at Kansas City, Mo., 7 p.m., ABC

## BIG 12 AT A GLANCE

### Thursday, Aug. 31

Toledo at Iowa State

### Saturday, Sept. 2

Louisiana Tech at Nebraska  
North Texas at Texas  
Montana State at Colorado  
Murray State at Missouri  
SMU at Texas Tech  
Northwestern State at Kansas  
Missouri State at Oklahoma State  
UAB at Oklahoma  
The Citadel at Texas A&M  
Illinois State at Kansas State

### Sunday, Sept. 3

TCU at Baylor

### Saturday, Sept. 9

Nicholls State at Nebraska  
Mississippi at Missouri  
Washington at Oklahoma  
Colorado vs. Colorado State (Denver)  
UL Monroe at Kansas  
UL Lafayette at Texas A&M  
UNLV at Iowa State  
Northwestern State at Baylor  
Oklahoma State at Arkansas State  
Florida Atlantic at Kansas State  
Ohio State at Texas  
Texas Tech at UTEP

### Friday, Sept. 15

Kansas at Toledo

## GAME 1

### Louisiana Tech Sept. 2

Location: Ruston, La.

Enrollment: 11,875

2005 record: 7-4

Coach: Jack Bicknell,  
eighth year

Series: Nebraska leads 1-0



2:30 p.m. CDT, FSN

Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, Neb.

### Bulldog to Watch

Junior kicker **Danny Horwedel** led the WAC in scoring and field



goals per game, hitting 18-of-26 attempts, and led Louisiana Tech with 88 points. He was a second-team All-WAC selection and has been named to the 2006 Lou

Groza Collegiate Place-Kicker Award Preseason Watch List.

### Quick Facts

The Bulldogs are returning to the site of one of their most memorable games. In a 56-27 loss at NU in 1998, quarterback Tim Rattay and wide receiver Troy Edwards combined to shatter numerous school and NCAA marks. Rattay was 46-of-68 passing for 590 yards and four touchdowns. Edwards had 21 receptions for 405 yards, including scoring catches of 52, 94 and 80 yards.

**NFL Hall of Fame quarterback Terry Bradshaw**, one of Louisiana Tech's favorite sons, donated a number of gifts to his alma mater in April. Bradshaw donated his four Super Bowl rings, his Pro Football Hall of Fame and College Football Hall of Fame rings, his Pro Football Hall of Fame bust, four miniature Super Bowl trophies and a Pittsburgh Steelers jersey and helmet back to Louisiana Tech.

## ON DECK

### Nicholls State Sept. 9

Location: Thibodaux, La.

Enrollment: 6,677

2005 record: 6-4

Coach: Jay Thomas, third year

Series: First meeting

Time TBA

Memorial Stadium, Lincoln, Neb.





## TENTATIVE 2-DEEPS

### NEBRASKA OFFENSE

WR	87	Nate Swift*	6-4	195	50
	88	Joda Petersen*	6-4	210	50
LT	84	Chris Patrick*	6-4	290	50
	79	Lydon Murno	6-7	315	50
TE	85	Greg Austin**	6-7	225	50
	82	Andy Christensen*	6-8	300	50
C	50	Kurt Mann*	6-4	290	50
	65	Greg Austin**	6-7	225	50
RB	81	Mike Huff*	6-1	205	50
	83	Jacob Hickman	6-4	240	50
HB	79	Matt Slauson	6-6	235	50
	77	Carl Nickle	6-7	315	50
FB	71	Matt Herlihy	6-6	245	50
	81	Joah Mueller	6-6	265	50
WR	83	Terrence Nunn	6-0	185	50
	73	Frantz Hardy*	6-1	180	50
QB	7	Zed Taylor*	6-2	210	50
	8	Joe Ganz	6-1	200	50
TE	41	Dene Todd**	6-11	235	50
	36	Thomas Lewman*	6-0	230	50
RB	34	Cody Glenn*	6-0	180	50
	28	Marlon Lucky*	6-0	210	50
FB	29	Jordan Congdon*	6-11	175	50

### NEBRASKA DEFENSE

DE	44	Jay Moore*	6-4	235	50
	99	Barry Turner*	6-6	250	50
HB	44	Ola Degundura	6-2	300	50
	83	Ndamukong Suh	6-4	375	50
TE	84	Barry Cryer*	6-2	240	50
	82	Ty Steinkuhler	6-2	290	50
DE	80	Adam Carriker	6-6	285	50
	86	Zach Potter*	6-7	260	50
HB	94	Stewart Bradley	6-4	245	50
	40	Lance Brandenberg	6-7	220	50
LB	43	Ceray McKson*	6-1	235	50
	62	Phillip Dillard*	6-1	255	50
WR	32	Steve Octavien	6-0	240	50
	51	Bo Ruud**	6-8	235	50
TE	7	Courtney Grieco	6-6	175	50
	27	Trus Brothers*	6-7	195	50
FB	8	Andrew Shanley	6-2	270	50
	14	Brandon Ripon	6-2	185	50
	65	Tierre Green*	6-1	205	50
	46	Ben Eisenhart*	6-7	200	50
QB	29	Andre Jones	6-0	185	50
	48	Tyrell Spain	6-6	190	50
FB	57	Dan Titchener	6-0	200	50

### LOUISIANA TECH OFFENSE

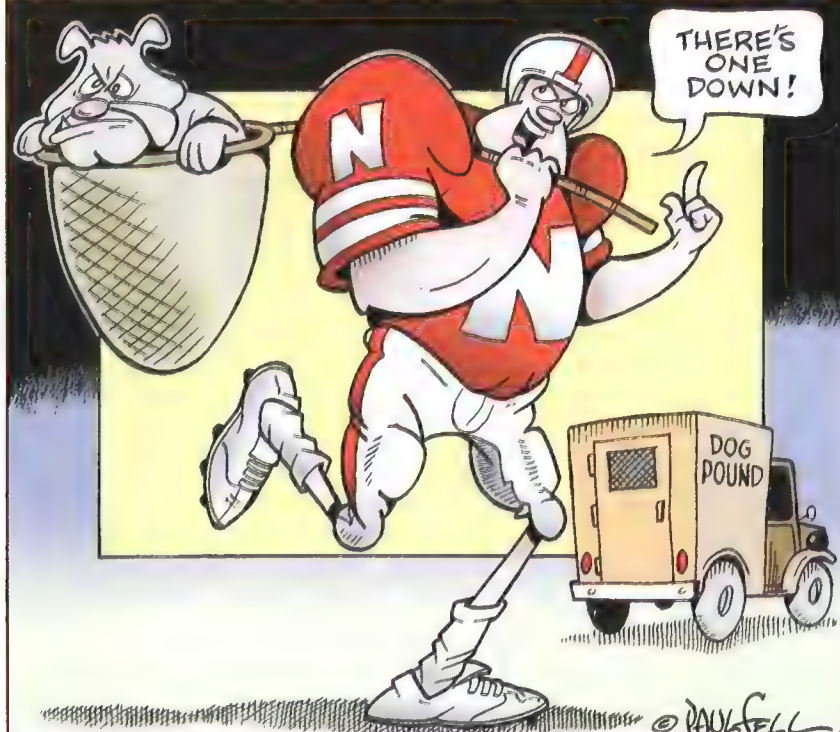
WR	7	Jonathan Holland	6-9	244	50
	41	Roderick Handy	6-7	210	50
LT	73	Tyler Miller	6-7	309	50
	66	Ryan Snell	6-8	287	50
TE	66	David Accardo	6-8	314	50
	52	Ben Harris	6-4	281	50
C	51	Jacob Peeler	6-3	341	50
	79	Jason Lewis	6-4	309	50
RB	75	Marcus Lindsey	6-7	285	50
	78	Dwight Alexander	6-8	300	50
HB	74	Ryan Considine	6-8	277	50
	74	Jason Gooch	6-8	218	50
TE	38	Anthony James	6-8	265	50
	47	Anthony Harrison	6-1	245	50
WR	87	Eric Newman	6-6	177	50
	48	Earl Griffin	6-5	207	50
TE	41	Josh Wheeler	6-4	300	50
	19	Shane Wornack	6-8	205	50
QB	10	Zac Champion	6-1	215	50
	13	Michael Mosley	6-1	202	50
HB	26	Freddie Franklin	6-0	116	50
	23	Patrick Jackson	6-10	191	50
FB	31	Danny Herwedel	6-2	200	50

### LOUISIANA TECH DEFENSE

DE	91	Sammy Collins	6-3	249	50
	99	Mark Cassimere	6-7	245	50
HB	92	Josh Muse	6-7	210	50
	96	Breon Jackson	6-5	210	50
TE	94	Wes Day	6-5	249	50
	87	Ben McGilton	6-3	230	50
LB	37	Quin Harris	6-3	221	50
	56	Tim Reddick	6-3	222	50
WR	98	Brannon Jackson	6-2	184	50
	82	Chris Lowery	6-2	220	50
HB	44	Anthony Crosby	6-0	207	50
	48	Clad Beverage	6-0	217	50
WR	4	Marquis Spurgeon	6-3	181	50
	45	Marquis McBeath	6-3	213	50
TE	10	Sandy Ray Collins	6-10	167	50
	18	Shalamar Walker	6-0	175	50
QB	25	Anthony Moss	6-10	183	50
	34	Torrance Hampton	6-9	189	50
FB	45	Deon Young	6-11	181	50
	36	Weldon Brown	6-10	180	50
TE	4	Dez Abrams	6-0	185	50
	14	Mark Dillard	6-11	222	50
FB	15	Chris Keagle	6-11	225	50

## THE PAUL FELL PREDICTION

# NEBRASKA vs. LOUISIANA TECH



SEPTEMBER 2, 2006

BULLDOGS FIND THEMSELVES ON THE SHORT END OF THE STICK AS THE HUSKERS NET A SEASON-OPENING VICTORY BEFORE HOME CROWD!

## Picks

Sept. 2



Brian Hill  
Editor



Mike Babcock  
Cont. Editor



Terry Douglass  
G.I. Independent



Sean Callahan  
Rivals.com

This  
Week's  
Guest

Jim Rose  
Pinnacle Sports

Louisiana Tech  
@Nebraska

Nebraska 34,  
La. Tech 9

Nebraska 38,  
La. Tech 3

Nebraska 37,  
La. Tech 10

Nebraska 38,  
La. Tech 10

Nebraska 45,  
La. Tech 10

Illinois State  
@Kansas State

Kansas St. 24,  
Illinois St. 8

Kansas St. 21,  
Illinois St. 7

Kansas St. 24,  
Illinois St. 6

Kansas St. 34,  
Illinois St. 17

Kansas St. 31,  
Illinois St. 10

UAB@  
Oklahoma

Oklahoma 38,  
UAB 6

Oklahoma 42,  
UAB 6

Oklahoma 41,  
UAB 13

Oklahoma 38,  
UAB 3

Oklahoma 42,  
UAB 0

USC@  
Arkansas

USC 33,  
Arkansas 10

USC 31,  
Arkansas 14

USC 17,  
Arkansas 13

USC 27,  
Arkansas 21

USC 21,  
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# 10 QUESTIONS

## with **JORDAN CONGDON**

**5-11/175 So. Place-Kicker**  
**San Diego, Calif.**

**J**ordan Congdon doesn't look back. Those closest to him, including his parents, have taught him that. "It doesn't matter what you did the day before. It's what you're doing right now," he said.

As far as he's concerned, he's only as good as his next kick. So he's always looking ahead.

Even so, his freshman produced plenty on which to reflect. He broke the school single-season record for field goals with 19, in 23 attempts, and he made 31 consecutive extra-point kicks after missing his first attempt. He earned Freshman All-America recognition, along with defensive end Barry Turner.

"Right when it happened, we were like, 'Yeh, it's cool,'" said Congdon. "It was great getting post-season accolades. It was awesome. I felt so blessed to have those opportunities."

He didn't dwell on them, however, turning his attention to preparing for his sophomore season. "The past is good or the past is bad," he said. "You've always got to get better, no matter what."

### **If you were allowed to eat only one thing for a month, what would it be?**

"Chicken tacos, with some guacamole. In San Diego, there are lots of Mexican food choices so I love Mexican food. I've always loved chicken tacos, so my mom used to make them all the time. She probably made them once or twice for a full week, with chicken, cheese, guacamole and tortilla chips. That works."

### **What's the best movie you've ever seen?**

"That's a tough one. I really like sports movies, so I'd probably go with 'Remember the Titans.' There was probably a summer where I watched it every night. I like all the movies about the race issue in sports, like 'Glory Road,' 'Remember the Titans' and 'Coach Carter.' I'm majoring in Spanish education and I want to coach. So I find those stories really inspiring."

### **What was the most difficult class you took as a freshman?**

"It would probably be a first-semester class. I would probably go with English, either English or geography. Geography was tough. I took it pass-no pass and I passed, so it wasn't that hard; I didn't have to get that high of a grade. In English, I don't like to read and in those kinds of classes you've got to force yourself to read or you're not going to pass. Writing is another point that I need to work really hard at. I've always had a difficult time with English, so I'd go with the English class."

### **What's the best thing they serve at the training table?**

"I'd say I eat the grilled chicken the most because it's healthy and Art does a great job of cooking it. They have it every night, pretty much."

### **If somebody visited you in San Diego, what would you want to show them first?**

"The beach, especially come out here to Nebraska, a lot of the kids I've met have never seen the water or the beach. So if one of my friends from here had never been to the coast, I'd take them to the beach. I live probably a 10- to 15-minute drive from the beach. I've tried surfing. It takes a lot of balance and I don't have very



Scott Rubin

good balance. I'm not very coordinated. When I'm back in San Diego, if I don't have something to do, I just go out to the beach and hang out there."

### **Who's the funniest guy on the team?**

"I'd probably go with Barry Cryer. He's just always joking around. The facial expressions he has are hilarious. That's what kills me."

### **What's your favorite television show?**

"I don't know, probably 'Sports Center.' I don't really watch that much TV. I watch movies more. But I'd probably say 'Smallville.' It's kind of like a show about Superman. And I guess I've always wanted to have that special thing that I could do and help people, in a way. So I could find a lot of things in him that I would want to find in myself."

### **What do you remember most about your recruiting visit to Nebraska?**

"Probably just the game, the atmosphere coming out, when we first came in the Tunnel Walk with all of the guys, seeing the stadium packed, seeing how loud it was, seeing it was all red like everybody said. I think that was just the coolest thing. It was the Kansas game."

### **If you could play any position on the team besides kicker, what position would you play?**

"I'd probably try to be a quarterback. I just like how they have to use their mind so much. It's basically 50-50 mental and physical. And that's kind of the way I look at kicking, too. If your mental game's not right, you're not going to be able to kick the ball. So I find a lot of things that are kind of in common, other than throwing and kicking, between the two spots. And just seeing how you have pressure on you all the time, all eyes on you. As a kicker, that's all I want. Like when the game's on the line, I cannot wait for that time because I want all eyes on me. QBs always have it on them. I just like that whole aspect of it."

### **Bungee jumping, sky diving or rock climbing?**

"I'd probably go with rock climbing. We have like an indoor-facility, rock-climbing kind of thing that I've done before. I've never been rock climbing outside. If it came down to it, I don't know if I'd do it. But it's fun. It's a really tough workout and I enjoy working out, so I like that aspect." ■



# Texas Flavor

**Latest commits  
include four from  
Lone Star State**

**By Rick Shaw**

**T**he Nebraska coaching staff managed to find a little bit of time for rest and relaxation during the summer months.

However, most of their energy was still consumed in building a better football team, as they conducted summer camps, supervised summer conditioning, and placed heavy focus on recruiting.

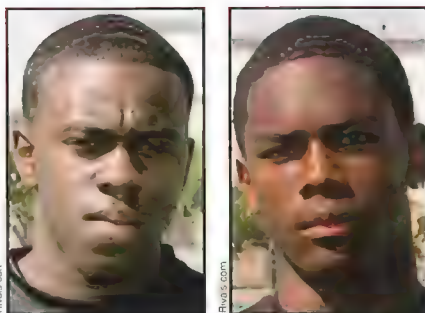
As for the latter, the Huskers earned commitments from six more athletes for their recruiting class of 2007, with four out of the six hailing from the state of Texas.

Shawn Sullivan, a cornerback out of Brenham, Texas, joined the Husker fold in early June, backtracking on an earlier commitment to TCU. Sullivan, a 5-foot-11, 182-pound athlete with 4.4-second speed in the 40-yard dash, was reported to be one of the top defensive back targets on the Huskers' recruiting board.

Rated the No. 89 prospect in Texas by Rivals.com, Sullivan was an all-conference pick in 2005 after racking up 43 tackles, seven tackles for loss and four interceptions. He chose the Huskers over offers from Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma State, Wisconsin and TCU.

"The reason I picked Nebraska is that I have been a fan for a long time," Sullivan said. "I felt that was the best school I could go to."

Another cornerback from the Lone Star State, Anthony Blue, gave his oral commitment to the Husker brass in late June. The 5-10, 172-pound speedster (4.47 40-yard dash) out of



Cornerbacks Shawn Sullivan (left) and Anthony Blue are among Nebraska's four commitments from Texas.

Cedar Hill said the combination of athletic and academic excellence offered by Nebraska was too good to pass up.

"It is the academics and academic support, and they really take care of their players," Blue said. "They also, obviously, have a pretty successful football history."

Blue, ranked as a three-star prospect by Rivals.com, picked Nebraska over offers from Baylor, Houston, Purdue, San Diego State, Tulane, UNLV and Wisconsin.

On the offensive side of the ball, the Huskers dipped into Texas to score an athletic tight end prospect as well as their possible field general of the future.

Ian Harris, a 6-foot-3, 217-pound tight end out of San Antonio, Churchill gave the Huskers, yet, another commitment in the month of

June, turning down offers from Arizona, Missouri, Oklahoma State, Purdue, Utah and UTEP in the process.

Harris, rated the No. 84 prospect in Texas by Rivals.com, was an all-district pick as a junior after snaring 24 catches for 289 yards and six touchdowns. Though he is still contemplating taking some additional visits, Harris said the fact that he grew up cheering for the "Big Red" played a big part in his decision to commit to Nebraska.

"Nebraska has been one of the teams that I have been rooting for since I was a small kid," Harris said. "(Lawrence) Phillips was there as a running back, and Eric Crouch was there, so I have been a fan for a long time now."

After losing out on a couple of quarterback prospects earlier in the recruiting process, the Cornhuskers were able to grab the commitment of a highly touted signal caller out of Texas at the end of June. Patrick Witt, a 6-4, 215-pound "flame thrower" from Wylie chose Nebraska over offers from Baylor, Indiana, Purdue, Texas Tech, Tulane, South Carolina,



Ian Harris is a long-time NU fan.

## NEBRASKA COMMITMENTS FOR 2007

Player	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	40	Hometown (School)
Anthony Blue	DB	5-10	172	4.57	Cedar Hill, Texas
Jared Crick	DE	6-6	245	4.8	Cozad, Neb.
Demetrious Davis	DT	6-2	286	5.22	St. Joseph, Mo. (Benton)
Ian Harris	TE	6-3	217	4.76	San Antonio, Texas (Churchill)
Ryan Hill	TE	6-3	230	4.7	Arvada, Colo. (West)
Niles Paul	WR	6-2	210	4.4	Omaha, Neb. (North)
Shawn Sullivan	DB	5-11	182	4.4	Brenham, Texas
DeAndre West	DB	6-1	195	4.4	Oakland, Calif. (Wilson Prep)
Patrick Witt	QB	6-4	215	4.95	Wylie, Texas



## RECRUITING NOTES

# Linebackers Consider NU

By Sean Stevens

**N**ebraska's commitment list has risen to nine for the 2007 recruiting class; however, that still trails Big 12 rivals Baylor, Texas, Kansas State, Texas A&M, Oklahoma State and Texas Tech. Husker fans want to know who the next player to join the Big Red family is. Here are some educated guesses at the most likely possibilities:

- The most likely player to make his pledge would seem to be Sugarland, Texas (Fort Bend Dulles) outside linebacker Brandon Herron. The 6-foot-2, 198-pounder, with 4.55-second speed in the 40-yard dash, sports scholarship offers from Colorado, Kansas State, Arizona, Michigan State and Texas Tech among others. He has outstanding athleticism, with a 37-inch vertical leap and 21 repetitions of 185 pounds on the bench press.

Wide receivers coach Ted Gilmore has been effective in his recruitment of Herron.

"I've been talking with Nebraska, I haven't committed yet because I need to go up and check out their campus," Herron told Rivals.com's John Talman. "We're trying for Sept. 1 actually. I can't tell you if anyone is going to change my mind on committing there or not. I'm not exactly sure myself."

It appears that Herron is just waiting for his trip to Lincoln.

- Another highly ranked outside linebacker strongly considering the Huskers is Overland Park, Kan., prospect Blake Lawrence. The 6-2, 199-pound Lawrence trimmed his list to Nebraska and Kansas in early July.

The Rivals.com four-star prospect, who sports a 30-inch vertical jump and 4.65-second 40-yard dash, wants to play in the Big 12 conference.

His commitment seemed imminent in mid-July, however, he's backed off a bit recently. Neither school has pressured him to choose.

"Not really. I still don't have a time frame on my commitment. I planned to take some more time with this, and they said that would be fine with them, so that was good news. I have a lot of thinking to do," he told HuskersIllustrated.com's Mike Matya. "Some new schools, like California, are coming into the mix, too. Kansas and Nebraska are still my top two, though."

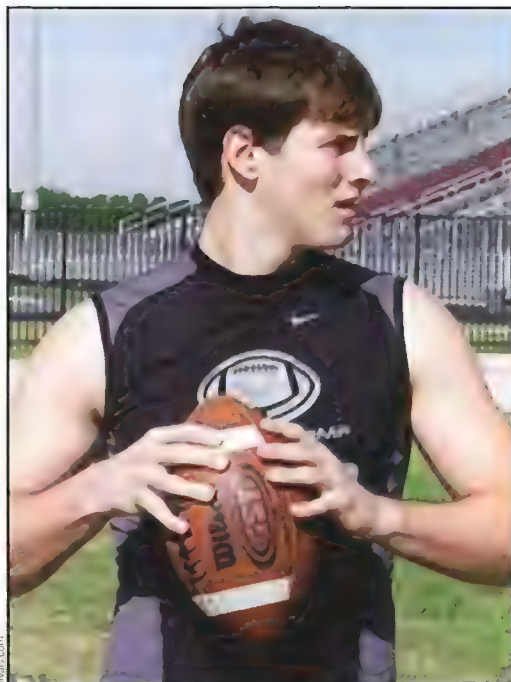
- Finally, we look at 6-5, 220-pound weakside defensive end Jared Glover of Bixby, Okla. Glover has a 4.75 40-yard dash along with a bench press of 305 pounds and a 4.0 grade point average. He seems to be a perfect fit for NU's defensive end tradition.

Glover visited Lincoln for the second time in July after watching from the stands during the Red-White Spring Game.

"Yes sir, it went great," Glover told HuskersIllustrated.com's Duane Rossiter. "I got to meet with all of the coaches again, and that was awesome. I got to really sit down with the strength coach, coach (Dave) Kennedy. He just filled me on all of the stuff they do."

Glover plans to take his official visits, however, he might not wait that long to decide.

"If I make up my mind before (the three officials) . . . if I get the right feeling in my heart on a definite No. 1, I am not going to wait around to commit. When I am ready, I'm going to commit and be done." ■



Quarterback Patrick Witt says he plans to enroll at NU in January.

Wisconsin, UTEP, Tulsa and others.

Rated the No. 71 prospect in the state by Rivals.com, Witt plans to enroll in January at Nebraska and make a run for the starting quarterback position in Lincoln in 2007.

"Really, the reason I chose Nebraska was because of the personal touch they had with everything," Witt said. "I didn't get the impression that this is a former NFL staff and they're way out of my league. They were just so down to earth that they made me feel real comfortable. After visiting and seeing a lot of schools, they tended to blend together, but I could tell that Nebraska would be a first class experience. I'll get to be with the first recruiting class that gets to use the new facilities, and then with the stadium, the fans, and the storied tradition that they have, it was a pretty easy decision."

Wylie head coach Bill Howard said that Witt has the potential to grow into an excellent quarterback during his years in the Nebraska program.

"He has an unbelievable arm . . . big time arm," Howard said. "I guess you would have to phrase the question on where he is at right now, where I think he can be, athletic ability, leadership, etc. He has the potential to play on Sundays."

In addition to the four Texas blue-chippers, Nebraska secured commitments from two Midwest athletes,



including one of the top prospects from Nebraska.

Jared Crick, a 6-6, 245-pound defensive end from Cozad pledged his commitment to Nebraska coaches in June. Rated the No. 4 prospect in the state by Rivals.com, Crick chose the Huskers over offers from Colorado State, Iowa State, Kansas, Wyoming and Ohio.

"Well, I was pretty set on going to Nebraska from the get-go . . . ever since they offered," Crick said, "but I just didn't have a clue when I was going to commit. But, today I talked to coach (Bill) Callahan, and he said that Husker Nation would be fired up if I just jumped on board. I thought, you know, I do want to be a Husker, so I went ahead and committed."

Crick, who runs a 4.8-second 40-yard dash, was a first-team all-state defensive lineman in 2005, tallying 75 tackles and five sacks.

Ryan Hill, a sleeper prospect at the tight end position, announced his intentions of attending Nebraska in early August. Though the 6-4, 230-pound prospect from Arvada, Colo.

(West), is a relative unknown in most recruiting circles, the Huskers project him to be a potential difference-making tight end in their West Coast offense over the next few years.

As a junior, Hill was named second-team all-state, hauling in 44 passes for 879 yards and 15 touchdowns. With good speed (4.7-second 40-yard dash) and strength (300-pound bench press), Hill has the athletic attributes to contribute earlier in his career in Lincoln.

"For how big I am, I'm pretty quick for a tight end," Hill said. "I can run. I guess my strong point is how big I am and I can move pretty well, and I have good hands for catching the ball. One game, I had like 13 catches for 150 yards and four touchdowns."

Heading into the season, Nebraska has already filled over one third of its allotment for the 2007 recruiting class and has established itself, once again, as a respectable recruiting presence in the state of Texas. ■

For more daily recruiting information, visit [huskersillustrated.com](http://huskersillustrated.com), a member of the Rivals.com network.

## HUSKER FANS

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September 16 at U.S.C.

October 21 Texas (home)

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9-2 Louisiana  
9-9 Nichols St.  
9-23 Troy  
9-30 Kansas  
10-21 Texas  
11-4 Missouri  
11-24 C.U.

### AWAY GAMES

9-16 USC  
10-7 Iowa St.  
10-14 Kansas St.  
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# In the Cards?

***NU aide almost 'became a part of the family' in recruiting Frazier***

**By Mike Babcock**

"We needed extra recruiters when we were at Wyoming. Not to recruit the kids but to keep them in Laramie once we got them. We had to keep one coach at the bus depot, one at the airport and another at the train station to keep our players from leaving town."

— **Bob Devaney's autobiography, "Devaney"**

**T**he story was that Nebraska won prize football recruit Tommie Frazier in a card game, probably gin rummy, involving then-Cornhusker assistant coach Kevin Steele and Frazier's mom, Priscilla. Though it didn't happen exactly that way, the story is based on an element of truth.

His mom loved to play cards: gin rummy, pinochle, spades, blackjack.

"That's one thing we did growing up," Frazier once recalled. "We always made sure on weekends we played games with each other. And we had a lot of fun."

Anyway, on the day in question, as he remembered it later, the game was gin rummy. And he wasn't playing. Steele and his mom were. Steele was in Bradenton, Fla., to visit him at Manatee High School. Steele hadn't planned to stop by his house but had some free time and decided to.

Clemson coach Ken Hatfield had scheduled a visit, however, and when he arrived, there was Steele, playing cards.

Steele got up, told Hatfield he was just leaving and excused himself.

Instead of going to visit another recruit, however, he drove around the corner, parked and waited for half an hour or so. When Hatfield finally left, he returned and the card game resumed.

NCAA rules allowed such visits at the time. Steele occasionally ate with the Fraziers and he would even stop when Tommie wasn't there, "or I was there and he was like, 'I don't need to talk to you. You can do what you want to do.' He would just sit there, hang with my mother," said

## First in a Series

Frazier.

"It was more like Kevin became a part of the family than being a recruiter."

Actually, that's what effective recruiting is, gaining a family's trust, which is why Steele, now executive head coach at Florida State, continues to be a successful recruiter. Athletes pick schools where they are comfortable "with the guy who recruited them," Frazier said.

Despite the connection with Steele, Frazier almost eliminated Nebraska because of his weariness with the recruiting process. He even called Steele to say he was canceling his campus visit. He had already taken four of a scheduled five trips and he was "sick of recruiting." He just wanted it to be over.

Frazier was ranked by some as the best high school option quarterback in the country. He was a USA Today prep All-American, having thrown for 2,600 yards and 30 touchdowns and rushed for 1,600 yards and 33 touchdowns in two seasons as a starter. Oh yes, he ran the 40 in 4.5 seconds.

He visited Clemson, Notre Dame, Syracuse and Colorado.

He loved Syracuse, having watched Don McPherson run the option for the Orangemen. But the school eliminated itself by telling him, during his visit, he would redshirt. No way could a coach know whether he was good enough to play as a freshman before he stepped on the practice field.

Notre Dame told him he would back up senior Rick Mirer for a season before having a chance to compete for the starting job. And Colorado pressured him to make a decision on his visit to Boulder, even though he had made it clear he intended to discuss any such decision with his mom first.

That left Clemson and Nebraska, both of which had indicated he would be given an opportunity to compete for playing time, if not the starting job, his first season. And since he was fed up

with recruiting visits, it appeared he would be headed to Clemson without visiting Nebraska.

When he told Steele he was canceling his trip, however, Steele immediately called his mom, who told Steele to call back in 10 minutes. During those 10 minutes, she reminded her son that he had been brought up to honor his word and he had given his word that he would visit Nebraska. She wasn't telling him he needed to pick Nebraska, she



Former NU assistant Kevin Steele, now the linebackers coach at Florida State, was named the 2005 National Recruiter of the Year by Rivals.com.



said, but he was going to make an official visit.

"One thing led to another," Frazier recalled. And he ended up a Cornhusker.

He went to Lincoln the last week in January, but the weather was unseasonably warm, maybe 60 degrees. Coach Tom Osborne told him that was typical of Nebraska in the winter.

"I knew he wasn't being serious," said Frazier. "I didn't buy into it."

Frazier's recruiting host at Nebraska was Mike Grant, also a quarterback and fellow Floridian. Frazier's first concern was to see how close the team was. He considered that of utmost importance. He also wanted to see how players acted off the field, the atmosphere at Nebraska.

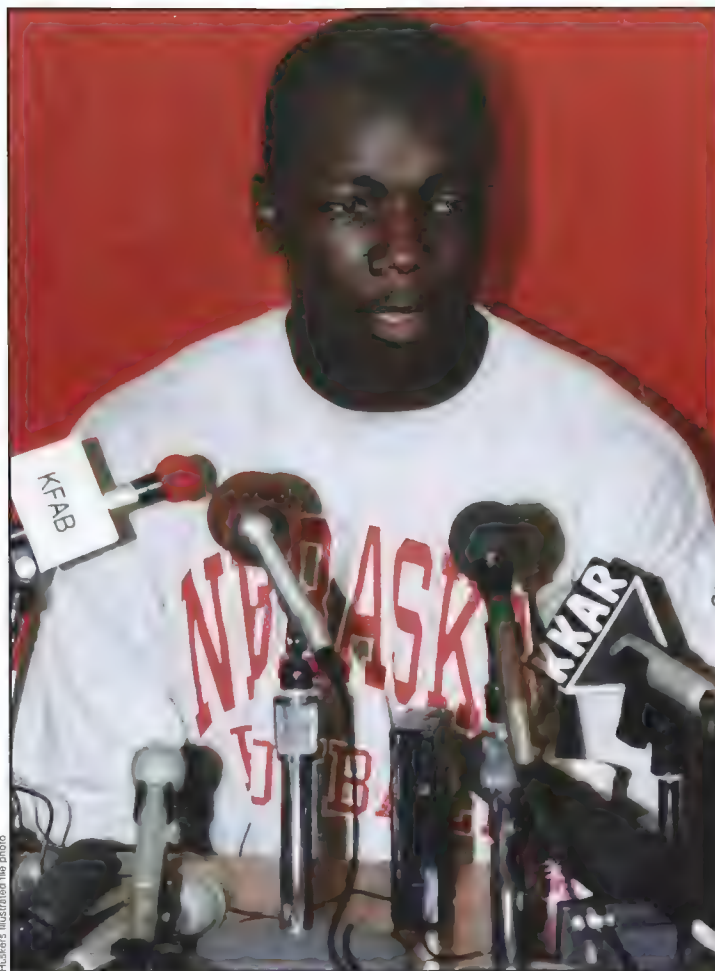
He was satisfied with what he saw, made his decision and became the starting quarterback midway through his freshman season. By the time he finished, of course, Osborne had two national titles and Nebraska was on an unprecedented run of success, winning a third two years later.

Osborne was an exceptional coach. He understood Xs and Os. He possessed extraordinary people skills. He had a system in which he believed. He recruited for that system, guided not by rankings but rather by his sense of how players would fit in and contribute to it.

When Bill Callahan arrived at Nebraska, he was charged with elevating the talent, a charge that required an emphasis on recruiting. He quickly responded, putting together the nation's fifth-best recruiting class in 2004, according to Rivals.com, and following with a solid class in 2005.

Unlike his immediate predecessors, Callahan hasn't relied primarily on high school recruits, bringing in junior college transfers as well in an attempt to restore the program to prominence. Nebraska last turned to junior colleges in the late 1960s, following 6-4 records in 1967 and 1968. Coach Bob Devaney sent a young Osborne to southern California to find immediate help in the form of transfers.

Recruiting draws much more attention now than it did then, attention driven by the Internet and a seemingly insatiable thirst for information about high school and junior college players. But it was no less important when Devaney arrived from Wyoming in 1962 and set the program on a course that has produced five national champi-



Tommie Frazier, who had become fed up with the recruiting process, almost skipped his official visit to Nebraska.

onships and an on-going home sellout streak.

Devaney also was the consummate recruiter (he put the accent on the first syllable, "RE-cruit"). He enjoyed the interaction with athletes and their parents. However, "the pressure of recruiting was one of the things that led me to hang it up as a coach," he wrote in his 1981 autobiography. The travel required of a coach in a sparsely populated state such as Nebraska (and Wyoming) became a burden.

Scholarship limits were much more generous then. Players could be recruited so that rival schools wouldn't get them. And if an evaluation proved to be faulty, plenty of others could step in.

Recruiting mistakes are magnified now because of the numbers. And more Division I-A schools provide more opportunity for immedi-

ate playing time. Plus, the interest in recruiting has created pressure not only on the coaches who pursue top athletes but also on the athletes themselves.

In that context, Huskers Illustrated will look back at Cornhusker recruiting classes in the next several issues, not by ranking necessarily — Osborne's rarely were high on national lists — but rather by interest. Every recruiting class has as many stories as members of the class.

The series will be roughly chronological, but again not definitive.

Nebraska recruited Tony Jeter, who earned All-America recognition as a two-way end as well as Academic All-America honors in 1965, out of Weirton, W.V. Cornhusker assistant Jim Ross was primarily responsible for his recruitment, but Devaney visited the Jeter home at the urging of Ross, who told Devaney that Jeter's mom played the organ at her church.

"Jim told me it would really impress her if I would offer to sit down and sing some hymns with her," Devaney wrote in his autobiography. "Well, sure enough, when I called at their home, she invited me to sit down on the organ bench alongside her. But after a piece or two, she'd had enough of my singing."

Some things haven't changed in recruiting. Some things have. Callahan doesn't have to assign coaches to watch the airport. When Harrison Beck, a quarterback and arguably the most publicized member of the 2004 recruiting class, left the team in training camp, he drove home to Clearwater, Fla. ■



# BASKETBALL



**Full name:** Kenneth Lee Sadler

**Nickname:** Doc

**Date of birth:** 6-12-60

**Hometown:** Greenwood, Ark.

**Education:** BS, Arkansas, 1982; MS, Northeastern State, 1991

**Family:** wife, Tonya; sons, Landon (13), Matthew (9)

**Head coach:** UTEP (2004-06); Arkansas-Fort Smith (1998-2003)

**Assistant coach:** Arkansas (1982-1983)



**NEBRASKA**

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"Doc Sadler is a terrific coach, and I think that he is an inspired choice for Nebraska. He is a technically sound coach, and he understands how to teach the game. But better yet, he is a passionate basketball man who will bring excitement, discipline and winning ways to Nebraska basketball. I think Doc Sadler is a great choice and one of the up-and-coming young coaches nation-wide."

— Jay Bilas, college basketball analyst

"From the moment I heard that Doc Sadler was a candidate for the Nebraska job. I thought he was the perfect choice for the job. Nebraska needs a coach that has a recruiting niche like in the state of Texas and in the junior colleges. Doc fits that to a T. I expect that Nebraska will be one of the teams fighting for postseason berths over the next couple of seasons."

— Andy Katz, ESPN.com



# 'A Grinder'

*NU officials move quickly  
after Collier decides to return  
to his alma mater as AD*

**STORIES BY MIKE BABCOCK**

**T**he Nebraska men's basketball program was without a coach only briefly. Kenneth "Doc" Sadler was introduced as the Cornhuskers' 26th coach on Aug. 8, a week after his predecessor, Barry Collier, was named athletic director at Butler University, his alma mater.

Athletic director Steve Pederson introduced the 46-year-old Sadler during a news conference at the Devaney Sports Center. In addition to reporters, the audience included Sadler's wife Tonya and sons Landon (13) and Matthew (9), as well as Cornhuskers Charles Richardson and Chris Balham and incoming freshmen Ryan Anderson, Kris Douse, Robert Sallie and Jay-R Strowbridge.

Sadler has been a head coach for seven seasons at the collegiate level, including five at Arkansas-Fort Smith, a junior college, and the last two at Texas-El Paso, where he succeeded Billy Gillespie, who left to become the head coach at Texas A&M. Sadler was Gillespie's assistant at UTEP.

Sadler's teams at UTEP were a com-

bined 48-18 (.738), advancing to the NCAA Tournament in 2005 and playing in the NIT last season. His record at Arkansas-Fort Smith was 120-39.

Sadler has "a great recruiting reputation, but what everybody said is that he's what I think I am and I think what Coach (Bill) Callahan is; that's a grinder," said Pederson. "You get in there and you just work and you work and you work. You've got to work harder than everybody else. If they're going to be (working) at midnight, you've got to stay up until 2. That's what everybody said about him."

Sadler has recruited eight players who went on to the NBA, including Tony Battie, Cory Carr and Jason Sasser. In talking with him "you could see why not only he can recruit, but the greatest measure in recruiting success is how your team plays and how your team progresses," Pederson said.

"It's one thing to recruit them. But if you do the right things with them, your other players help you recruit new players in. I think the one thing that always gets lost in recruiting is, what your own players think has more impact on recruiting, probably, than anything else." ■

"I think Doc is one of the top coaches in the country. I could not believe how good he was when I went and watched drills. He's got a hand on the game, and I thought he did a wonderful job. I have been around a few years and haven't seen anyone better. This guy should have been a head coach 10 to 12 years ago. Nebraska is getting an excellent coach, and he will get the best out of his players. He is a first-class guy and he makes it easy to say these things. The most amazing thing is his uncanny ability to get his players to practice hard and work. His are some of the hardest workouts I have ever seen on a basketball court. He always gets the best out of his players. I've also never seen a guy work so hard at recruiting. He has unbelievable energy and is a hard worker. He's easy to talk to and believe in. And he's won everywhere he's been before."

— Don Haskins, former head coach, UTEP

**Awards:** NJCAA Region II  
Coach of the Year, 2001, 2002



# Doc Sadler's Opening Statement:

What can I say? This is just probably the most exciting day of my life. Whew, I can get passion now. I was raised in a coaching family. My dad was a football coach. And I told Steve and Mark, he wished I was coaching football here instead of basketball. But he would be very proud. It's something that I've always wanted to do was coach from the time I can remember.

I come from an education family. My dad, like I said, coached for over 30 years. My sister's a teacher. My brother's a teacher. My mom's a nurse. And we come from a great family. I've got a great family here. Anybody that's associated with any kind of athletics will tell you that's the backbone of our family. And I can't tell you how much I appreciate them.

But Doc Sadler is pretty simple. I had a chance to work with some wonderful people that taught me a lot about basketball and a lot about life. And the thing that I've always come away from is that, you know, everything is pretty simple. It's pretty simple, don't make it too difficult. I learned that from a lot of people. And I listened good. And that's the way I try to be; everything in my life's simple. I keep coaching simple. Maybe it's because I'm not smart enough to make it difficult. But at the same time, I want to have fun.

I met with our players that are here today, a couple of them on the phone. I'm going to make it a point . . . I told them, we're going to have a lot of fun playing this game. And the only thing I want, because I think the fans of Nebraska deserve it, is that every day we leave the court, whether it be practice or games, is that you have played harder than the other team. And if we can say that - that sounds simple; it is simple - but that's all I'm going to ask. I don't know how many games we're going to win. I don't know any of those things. But I do know this: we've got some talented players. I've had a chance to watch some tape, and if we can get that one thing, that one, simple thing accomplished, we're going to have a great, great time here.

I've been here before when it wasn't fun. I came here in the early days with a team from Arkansas and we got ran out of this place. And one of the reasons we got ran out of it was because this place was packed. And that's what we're

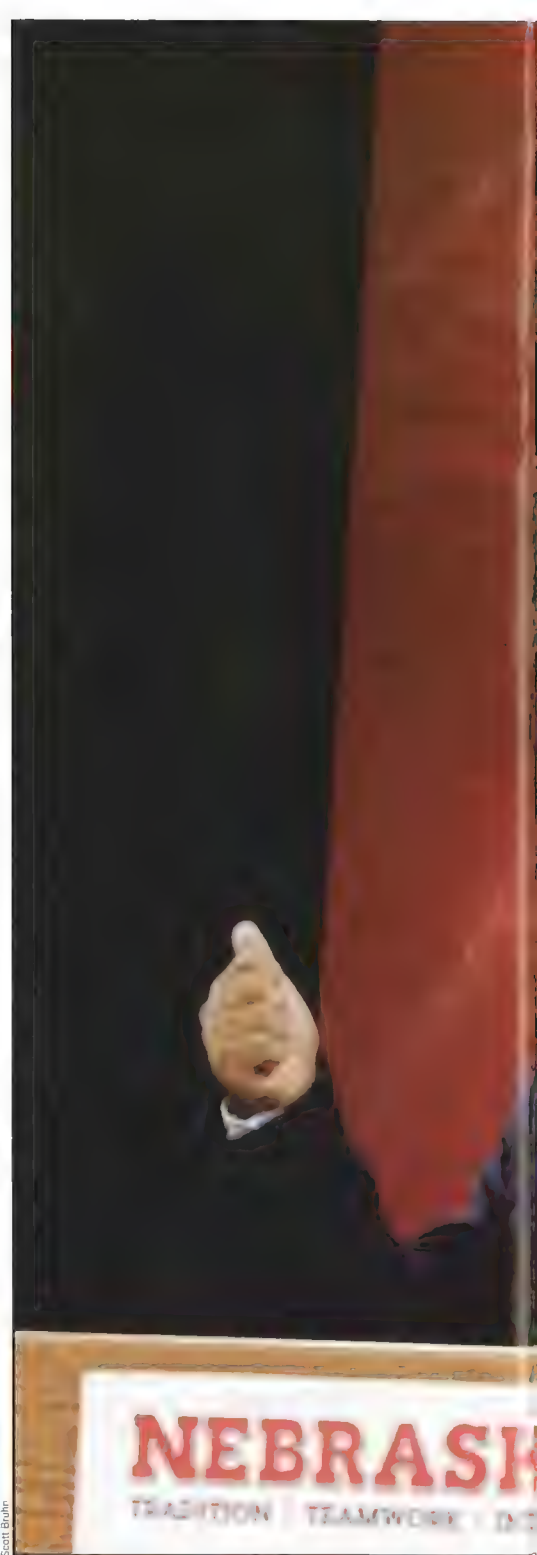
going to get this thing back to. It is a very, very difficult place to come in here and play, not because of me. And this is the one thing I want to get across today: I am so, so fortunate.

But I can't do this by myself. I need these guys to do it and I need everybody in Nebraska to do it. Because I grew up in Arkansas and I know what it means to wear "Nebraska" on the front of your jersey. I know what you want, I know that what you expect is not something you shouldn't get and that's that our guys are going to come out here and just bust it every single day. I told our guys, "I've got two rules. I've got two rules." You guys and ladies that come to the first game, you're going to think, "Who in the heck has Steve and Mark hired? This guy's nuts. Guys are just substituting on their own. They're not paying attention to the coach." My rule is this: You know, you can only play five. And there are about 13 or 14 that think they should be playing. And so we're going to be playing five guys and there are going to be seven or eight sitting over here to my side. And my two rules are this: If there's a loose ball on that floor and one of your teammates doesn't get on that floor for that loose ball, if you want to play, get up and get in there. Go straight to the scorer's table. I won't say a word. You better see guys fighting to get up there. My second one is, if you get a chance to take a charge, you better take a charge.

Now, I told these guys, "That's on you." We've got free substitution. What in the heck is free substitution? When your teammate's not playing as hard as you do, or as hard as you think they should be playing, get in there for him. Go on. Go on. Your teammates are going to hold you accountable. And so it's going to be really, really, really fun. They're not going to like me sometimes, but when we leave this floor, we're going to love each other.

The first thing I'm going to do here, what we need, Mark, is some doorstops to open up them office doors. I hate an office door that's closed. I want every office door open. And when they walk by, if they don't stop in here, I'm going to be mad. I told them when they get through studying late at night and they drive by here about 10 or 11 and my car's out there and they don't stop by, I'm going to be mad.

I'm going to be mad because I want to do one thing for them. And I told them this. I'll give you every, every ounce of energy that I have to make sure that when you leave here, the coach did not cheat you out of one day, out of one day. How many of you remember the greatest years of your life? It's probably when you were in college. These guys are in college. They should have fun. I'm not going to cheat them out of one day, out of one single day. That's my only goal. And when I walk into a family, that's what I'm going to tell them. I'm not going to talk



Scott Bruhn





Former UTEP coach Kenneth "Doc" Sadler makes his opening remarks after he was officially named Nebraska's new head coach during a news conference Aug. 8 at the Bob Devaney Sports Center.

about playing time. I'm not going to talk about anything else. But I won't cheat your son out of a single day of the greatest years of his life. And I believe that. I don't want somebody to cheat my sons out of the greatest days of their life.

The last thing and I'll open it up to questions, someone asked me a while ago, "Why would you come to Nebraska?" And you know, it's pretty simple. I've got a chance to coach at a place that's had 233 Academic All-Americans. I've got a chance to coach at

a place that's won 22 national championships. Now, you don't win national championships because of great coaching.

I truly believe this. Because you've had 233 Academic All-Americans, you've had some high-character people. And you've also had an athletic (department) and university that cares about kids. You do not have that type of success by just wanting it. You've got a lot of people working for that to happen. Because everybody works together,

we've won 22 national championships. What more could a coach ask for than that? I can't think of anything else.

So I know that's not real complicated. I didn't give you any formula, but the last thing I want to say to you is, I love suggestions. The only thing that I ask of you — you can give 'em to me all you want — is give 'em to me before the game and not after it because they won't do us any good after the game. So if you've got some suggestions on how we can win, I'll listen to you. OK? ■



# Q&A

**Q: How did you get the "Doc" nickname?**

**Doc:** Any of you seen Gunsmoke? Nobody's ever seen it? OK. I'm still going to tell you the story. Who saved everybody's life on Gunsmoke? My dad was a high school coach, and his boss was a high school coach, and I had a hat signed when I was real young by Doc on Gunsmoke. And I wore that hat all the time. So that's how I got the name Doc, pretty simple.

**Q: How big of a challenge is the Big 12 going to be?**

**Doc:** How big of a challenge? I think it's going to be fun. Oh, it's going to be fun. That's the reason these guys are sitting over here. They want to play at the highest level of basketball. They want to be challenged. So it's going to be fun. I mean, I've got some great friends coaching in this league. There are some great arenas. But you know, when you get down to it, it's all about these guys over here, and it's going to be real fun stepping out there with them.

**Q: How fast has this process gone?**

**Doc:** Not fast enough. When I heard that Coach Collier was moving on . . . I was always told that if you can get the opportunity to coach at the "University of" and then you get a chance to coach at the University of Nebraska, you better do everything you can. I had a great job. I don't know if people realize that. UTEP is a great basketball job, great fans, everything, great tradition. But this is Nebraska, man. This is Nebraska. So when it opened until today seems like three months. It didn't happen fast enough.

**"You ever watch tennis? We're going to play baseline to baseline. We're going to get it up and down."**

**— Doc Sadler**

**Q: How would you describe your offensive philosophy?**

**Doc:** You ever watch tennis? We're going to play baseline to baseline. We're going to get it up and down. I told the guys today, again, we're real simple. I'm going to ask so much of these guys on one end of the floor (defensively). They have no idea how much I'm going to ask of them, none. But to do that, I'm going to tell them they can go as fast to that (offensive) end as they want to. I told them, "Plays, if we've got to draw up a bunch of plays, we're in trouble because I want guys that can play." So we're going to go as fast as we can, and if we get a good shot, we're going to shoot it quick. If we don't, we're going to wait 'til we do get a good shot." So it's going to be baseline to baseline, 94 feet.

**Q: Have you contacted any players you recruited at UTEP?**

**Doc:** No, I have not. I have not talked to any of them. And that's unfortunate. I'd love to talk to them. That's a crazy rule with the NCAA, but I'm not allowed to and I'm not going to jeopardize this program. I hate it. It's not fair. But that's the way it is.

**Q: Do you have a home base in recruiting?**

**Doc:** I'm going to recruit wherever I have to go. I've had players from Brazil, Puerto Rico, New York, California, Florida. Wherever I need to go I'm going to go. I think it's changed. Used to be you could say, "Well, I'm going to recruit this one part of the country." I don't think you can do that anymore. And the good news is, because of Nebraska's name, it's going to make it easier to get into people's houses in different areas. I do think Texas is an area, though, that because of the number of teams in the





New basketball coach Doc Sadler was joined at his news conference by NU executive associate athletic director Marc Boehm (left) and athletic director Steve Pederson (right).

league that are in Texas that we'll concentrate on it.

**Q: Did anybody remind you that Nebraska is a football school?**

**Doc:** Oh yeah. I know it's a football school. I don't need somebody. That's great. I mean, where else can you get 3 hours on Saturday, national TV, publicity, probably seven or eight times a (season). It's great that football's good here. Again, I'm a football guy. We're going to take advantage of it. I'm getting sweaty palms thinking about September, I think the 2nd. I can't wait to have some recruits here and walk out there with 80,000 people, wow, that's going to be an unbelievable experience. It's going to be fun.

**Q: Who were your coaching influences?**

**Doc:** Eddie Sutton, that's where I

started, and I think if you really want to get down to it, probably Mr. (Henry) Iba. Now, that's just on one end of the floor. I'm probably a little bit looser offensively than anybody I've ever coached for. But a coach told me this once and I've remembered it. If you're going to ask them to play the way you want them to play them as hard as you want them to play on one end of the floor, then let them do something on the other end that they want to do. We're going to guard. I don't think you can win in the Big 12 without guarding. But I told these guys, they'll know if I think they can shoot, but more importantly, they'll know if their teammates think they can shoot. If they come down on a break and they're a shooter and they're 19 feet open, 3-pointer, and they don't shoot it, oh, we're going to have problems. We're going to have serious problems because they're hurting our team. They're not going to be afraid to shoot

and miss. My job is to let them know during practice, "That's your shot. If you're open, you shoot it." I told the guys this today, the only shot I really think is a bad shot is that early in the shot clock, if you shoot a 3-point shot and you get fouled. I have a problem with that. And they'll know that because I don't think you're open. They're close enough to foul you? I try to make it real simple. Did he foul you? Was he close enough? Then you weren't open. If he wasn't, shoot it, shoot it. That's the way I play offense. I don't think you can play by shooting like this (looking at the bench). "I'm coming out?" You're coming out if you don't get back (on defense).

**Q: Do you think consistently making the NCAA Tournament is realistic?**

**Doc:** That's the only goal, is to be successful. I don't care about winning games. We've got to play harder than the other team. All I want them to concentrate on is playing hard. If that happens, these guys are talented enough. You're going to win games. But the state of Nebraska deserves us to be in the NCAA Tournament. And we want it to happen not next year, not two years from now; we want it to happen now. Hey, Charles (Richardson) is graduating. He ain't going to be here. You think he cares about next year? He wants to play in that thing this year. So that's what we're going to try to do. We need your help. We need the whole state's help. We need the whole state's help.

**Q: Did you buy that red tie you're wearing today?**

**Doc:** No, I actually didn't. I bought it before I came though. You like it? I want you to understand one thing: This is your basketball team. It's not Doc Sadler's basketball team. It's the state of Nebraska's basketball team. And again, I'm sincere in this, if you can help us with a suggestion or whatever, my door is open all the time. It's your basketball team. I understand that, and I'll do everything I can to help you guys be proud of what we're going to do. So I'm ready to roll. Volleyball season's coming up. Football season's coming up. What else? Soccer? Go Big Red. Thank ya'll. ■



# 'It's Like a Freshman

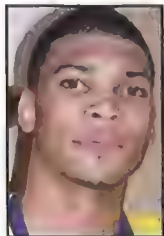
## Newcomer says team can win, despite the changes

**T**wo years in prep school have served Roburt Sallie well. Without the experience and maturity of those years, he might not be at Nebraska, preparing for his freshman season.

"Right out of high school, I couldn't do this, to be honest," Sallie said following the early-August news conference to introduce Doc Sadler as the Cornhuskers' new basketball coach.

"It's too much on a kid coming straight out of high school."

The "this" to which Sallie referred meant sticking with his commitment



Roburt Sallie

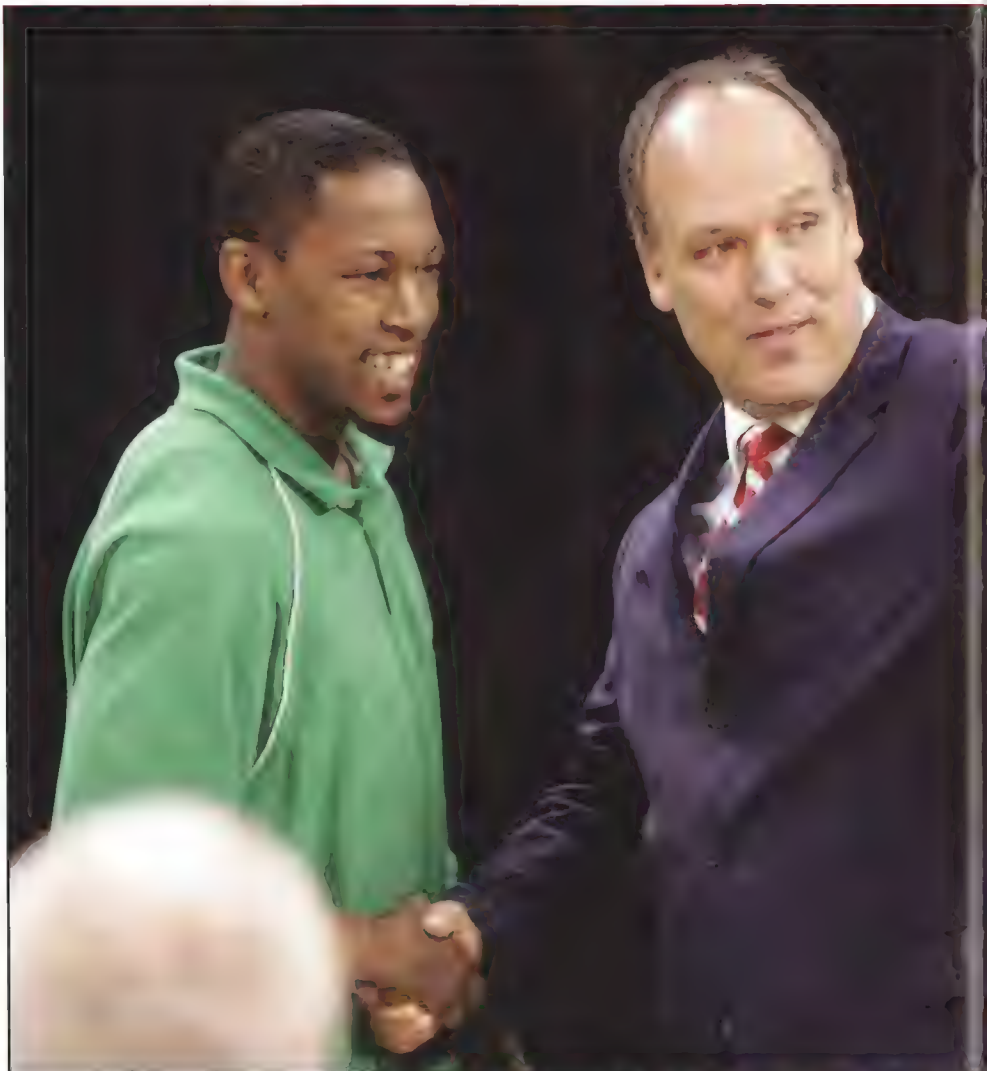
to Nebraska despite dramatic changes. First assistant Scott Spinelli, the coach who recruited him, left for Wichita State. Then coach Barry Collier accepted the job as athletic director at Butler University, leaving the status of the other assistant coaches in doubt. And Sallie had been in Lincoln barely a month.

"It's mind-boggling," said Sallie. "It's like a fresh start. I'm open, pretty much, to a lot of things right now. I'm just going to soak it in, hopefully do my job, and we're going to perform."

Sallie was among six players on hand for the news conference at the Devaney Sports Center. The others were: Charles Richardson, Chris Balham, Kris Douse, Ryan Anderson and Jay-R Strowbridge. Richardson and Balham are returning. The others, like Sallie, are freshman recruits.

Prior to meeting Sadler, earlier that day, "I had doubts a lot," Sallie said.

But he was immediately impressed with the new coach. The two talked



Doc Sadler greets senior guard Charles Richardson, one of several players on hand for the announcement.

briefly before a group meeting with the players, and "I felt a lot better," said Sallie. "You know you can get a vibe about somebody, where they're just pretending. With him it was all 100-percent real. He was himself."

"He told us flat-out, 'We're not going to have a lot of plays. We're going to play hard. And if you don't play hard, you won't play.' I come from a program in prep school where that's how it went down. We had 15 Division I players and if you didn't play hard, you were coming out. That's how it's going to be here."

Two seasons ago, Sallie, a 6-foot-5, 190-pound guard, played at Laurinburg (N.C.) Institute, where

his teammates included Douse and Cornhusker sophomore Jamel White. Last season, he played at The Patterson School in Lenoir, N.C., averaging 13 points, seven assists and four rebounds for a 34-3 team. He averaged 11 points the previous season, for 40-0 Laurinburg Institute.

Even though he's a first-year player, he has assumed a leadership role. "I put it on my shoulders," he said. "This team looks up to me. I do what I have to do. If I have to be a role player and watch the young guys flourish, that's what I have to do. I'm a team player. I just want to win."

Despite the changes, including the departure of several players follow-



# esh Start'



ing last season and uncertainty about whether Aleks Maric would return for his junior season (Maric announced he wouldn't return but changed his mind after Sadler travelled to Australia to meet with him), Sallie thinks the team can win.

"It's all on our shoulders," he said. "We're young. We're going to definitely struggle, but I think everybody . . . I look them in the eyes and I see bright futures for all of us. I don't see why we can't make the tournament as a young team."

The Cornhuskers also will lack size. With 7-foot Toni Soda, another product of The Patterson School who signed a letter of intent with Nebraska, not coming because of a language requirement deficiency, the

team's tallest player — other than the 6-11 Maric — is 6-9 sophomore Jim Ledsome.

However, "we've got shooters. We've got athletes. We've got under-sized big men, but, I mean, they can run. We're going to run. That's the style we're going to play," Sallie said. "And I think we need every single player to make this happen."

He was recruited to play a more structured style of offense under Collier, of course, and "I wouldn't mind playing in a slowdown system, feeding off a big guy — if a big guy was here," he said. "The kind of player I am is I feel comfortable regardless."

Sadler's offense is "the complete opposite of Coach Collier's. It's definitely going to be a whole different pace if what he says is actually going to happen," said Sallie.

About a month before Collier pursued the Butler job, the players met, Sallie said, and "decided regardless of who was in here, we were going to get it done." As a result, he's "prepared for anything. Everything happens for a reason. I believe in Coach Sadler; I really believe in the man. His system has worked before, and I don't see why it couldn't work here."

Had Sallie been coming to Nebraska right out of high school in Sacramento, Calif., he might not have such an attitude. He might have found it much more difficult to deal with the changes.

The community has helped, too. "Everybody's so devoted to Nebraska, period, not just basketball, everything," he said. "That's what I love, coming from Sacramento. You're more on your own out there. That's why I survived what we're going through. It's going to come out to be a positive."

"I'm not worried about it. I've kind of locked into Nebraska, got to feel the vibe, been places and stuff. So I'm getting real acclimated. I like it. I like it a lot. I can't wait to get my parents down here. I can't wait 'til Coach Sadler meets my parents. I can't wait to get this show on the road. ■



Junior center Aleks Maric decided to return after a visit from his new coach.

## Current Players 'All Important'

Aleks Maric was noticeably absent from the audience when Doc Sadler was introduced Nebraska's new head basketball coach. Maric had just asked for a release from his scholarship. The 6-foot-11, 265-pound Australian had decided not to return to Nebraska for his junior season.

"I have not talked to him," Sadler said when asked at the news conference. "I will talk to him as soon as I can; but not just Aleks. I'm going to talk to all of them. They're all important to me."

As for Maric, "obviously, how quick I get a hold of him is how quick he answers the phone."

As it turned out, however, a phone call wasn't sufficient. In less than a week, Sadler was on his way to Sydney, Australia. And before he returned, he had persuaded Maric to remain a Cornhusker. He also made sure that Jamel White would be back for his sophomore season.

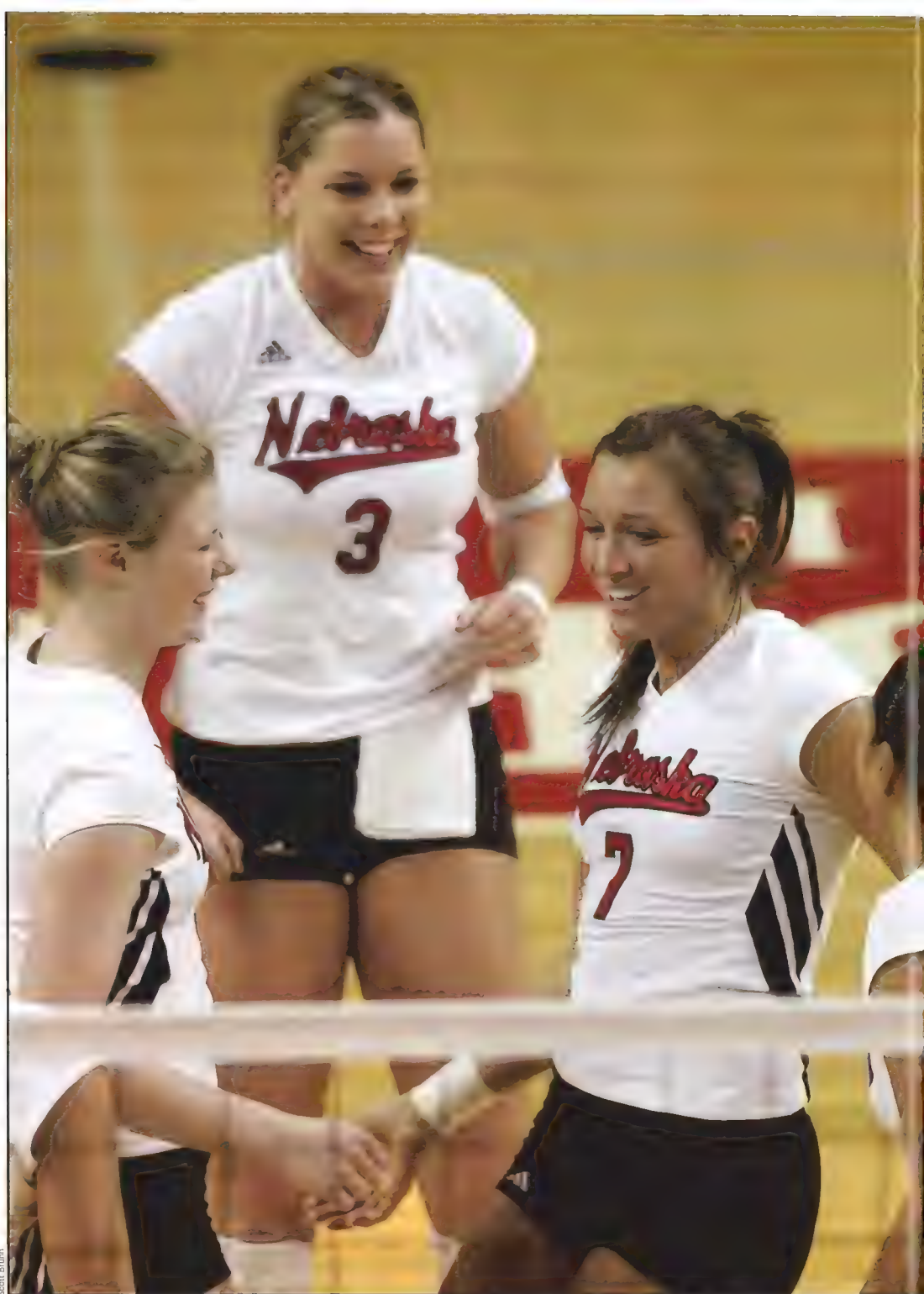


Jamel White

White was recruited by former Nebraska assistant Scott Spinelli and his uncle, "Silk" Owens, was released as a Cornhusker assistant coach, after what proved to be a brief tenure, creating concern about White's status. So Sadler visited him in Brooklyn on the way home. More good news. ■



# 'The Journey'



Senior Dani Mancuso (7), a part-time starter as a freshman and sophomore, will take over at outside hitter for Christina Houghtelling (3), who is sidelined after shoulder and knee surgery.

## ***NU begins its title quest without 2005 player of the year***

**By Todd Henrichs**

**D**ani Busboom and her teammates have billed this season as, "The journey." The path, they hope, will lead them to a national champi-

onship appearance in Omaha this December.

But before their season ever began, members of the Nebraska volleyball team traversed a road with more twists and turns than an NU quarterback saga.

Foremost, the Huskers learned they would play the season without Christina



Houghttelling, last year's national player of the year in large part due to her unbelievable performances in four matches played at Qwest Center Omaha, this year's home to the final four.

Thankfully, head coach John Cook says, the Huskers prepared for Houghttelling's loss and just about any other pitfall that might come their way this season in a training trip to Asia last spring.

"When you're forced to be with each other for 18 days and you can't talk to anybody else — you don't have your parents and you don't have your friends — you have to get along," said Busboom, who has made the switch from setter to libero for her senior season. "I think our team grew a ton together, and we learned so much about each other. Definitely, the chemistry on the court and the way we interact is by far the best it's been since I've been here."

They'll need it without Houghttelling, a physical presence at outside hitter who will redshirt this season after undergoing both shoulder and knee surgery this summer.

Nebraska played without Houghttelling at times during its training trip, performing well enough for Cook to believe the Huskers can still reach all of the goals that are customary in the tradition-rich NU program.

But it won't be easy. Winning the Big 12, something Nebraska has accomplished eight of the past 10 seasons, will be a significant accomplishment considering many believe Texas to be a top-five team this season. Missouri came within a win of reaching the final four last year.

And this year's race for the national championship might be as wide-open as ever. Leading contenders include defending champion Washington along with Penn State, Stanford and Florida. Yet a poll of 60 coaches landed Nebraska the No. 1 ranking in the preseason CSTV top 25, that coming after news broke that Houghttelling would miss the season.

"I was a little bit surprised, but I just think that shows the respect that Nebraska volleyball has," Cook said. "It's a good feeling to know that they think that highly of our program."

In many ways, Cook said Houghttelling's injury has her team-



Dani Busboom has made the switch from setter to libero for her senior season.

mates more determined than ever to prove that Nebraska deserves that respect. It's like the 2000 season when All-American Nancy Meendering elected to redshirt and a team of over-achieving Huskers went on to claim the national championship in Cook's first season.

By comparison, Nebraska has many fewer question marks entering this season. In junior Sarah Pavan, it has someone who could succeed Houghttelling as the national player of the year. Big things, too, are expected from Busboom, sophomore Jordan Larson and junior Tracy Stalls.

Determining a starting setter was a focus of preseason drills, but whoever wins the job — junior Maggie Griffin or redshirt freshman Rachel Holloway — will have the respect of teams from across the country. A young middle blocker must also emerge, either freshman Kori Cooper or sophomore Amanda Gates.

Then there is Dani Mancuso, the senior who will take over Houghttelling's spot at outside hitter. Mancuso isn't without experience. She started off and on for NU during her freshman and sophomore years.

"She has shown signs of brilliance throughout her career, she played great in Asia, and it's her time," Cook said. "That's one of the lessons we learn in team sports. You persevere and when your opportunity arises, you take advantage of it. I know in talking with Dani and seeing her and her commitment this summer, she is certainly ready for that."

In pointing out that the journey for this year's Huskers began in February, Cook has made it clear that the team has moved past last season's loss to Washington in the national championship match. But Busboom says the ease of the Huskies' victory remains in the back of her mind. It's a source of motivation for this season.

"We don't want that to happen this year," she said. "We don't want to come that close and fall short."

"We're going to do the little things, all the details that could possibly make a difference." ■

**Todd Henrichs** covers the Nebraska volleyball team for the Lincoln Journal Star. He can be reached at 473-7439 or [thenrichs@journalstar.com](mailto:thenrichs@journalstar.com)

## SCHEDULE

Aug. 26 Alumni Match 5 p.m.  
Aug. 26 Red-White Scrimmage 7 p.m.  
Aug. 29 San Diego 7 p.m.

### Labor Day Tournament At Lincoln, Neb.

Sept. 1 St. Mary's 7 p.m.  
Sept. 2 Middle Tennessee State 7:30 p.m.  
Sept. 3 Long Beach State 2 p.m.

### Players Challenge At Lincoln, Neb.

Sept. 8 Louisville 7 p.m.  
Sept. 9 Cal Poly TBA  
Sept. 10 Minnesota 2 p.m.

Sept. 13 Kansas 7 p.m.  
Sept. 16 @Oklahoma 7 p.m.  
Sept. 20 Iowa State 7 p.m.  
Sept. 23 Texas Tech TBA  
Sept. 24 @Creighton 2 p.m.  
Sept. 30 @Baylor TBA  
Oct. 4 Kansas State 7 p.m.  
Oct. 7 @Texas A&M  
Oct. 11 @Missouri 6:30 p.m.  
Oct. 14 Colorado 7 p.m.  
Oct. 18 @Texas 6:30 p.m.  
Oct. 25 Missouri 7:30 p.m.  
Oct. 28 @Kansas State 7 p.m.  
Nov. 1 @Texas Tech 7 p.m.  
Nov. 4 Oklahoma TBA  
Nov. 8 @Iowa State 6:30 p.m.  
Nov. 11 @Colorado 8 p.m.  
Nov. 15 Texas A&M 7 p.m.  
Nov. 18 Baylor 7 p.m.  
Nov. 22 @Kansas 7 p.m.  
Nov. 25 Texas 7 p.m.

### Nov. 30-Dec. 3 NCAA First/Second Rounds At Campus Sites

### Dec. 8-9 NCAA Regionals At Campus Sites

### Dec 14-16 NCAA Final Four At Qwest Center (Omaha, Neb.)



# CROSSWORD

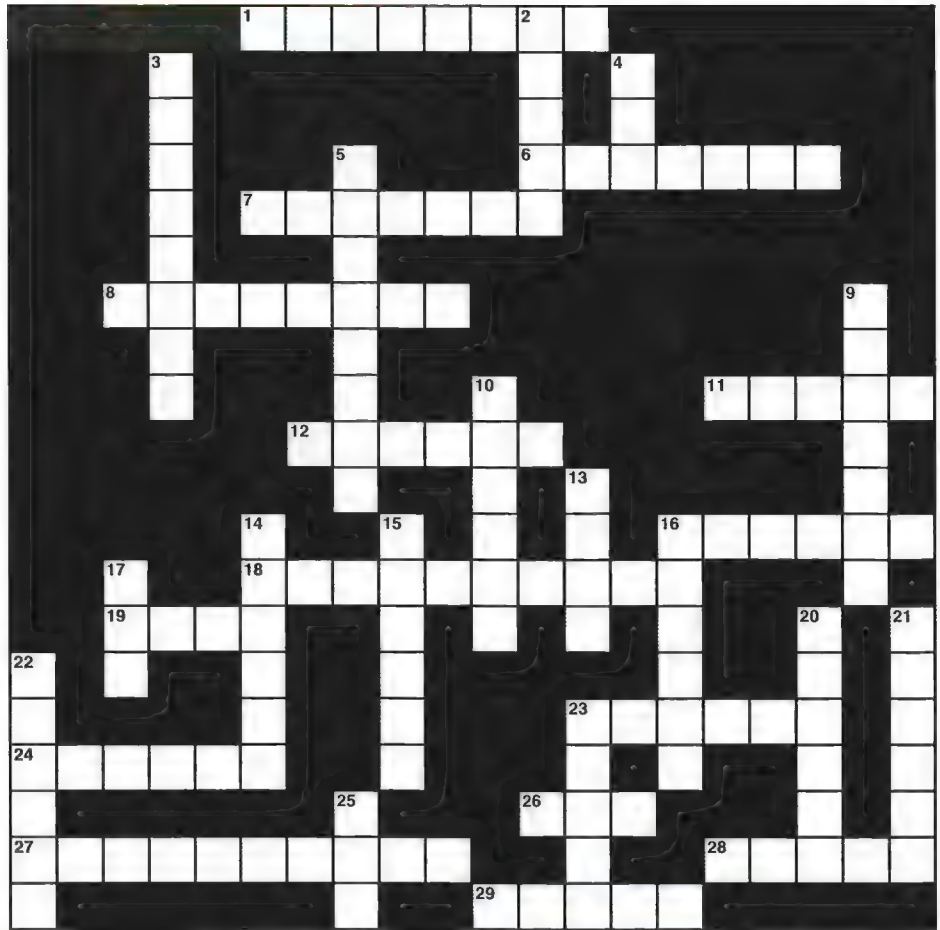
## ACROSS

- 1 Louisiana Tech head coach
- 6 Head strength coach
- 7 Wears No. 34 (defense)
- 8 Louisiana Tech nickname
- 11 Special teams coordinator
- 12 Cornerback who is out for the season
- 16 Junior college I-back
- 18 Jordan Congdon's home state
- 19 Quarterback who recently left program
- 23 NU's first Lombardi Award winner
- 24 Louisiana Tech campus location
- 26 Winning team in Spring Game
- 27 Quarterback who recently joined program
- 28 Defensive lineman from Louisiana
- 29 Junior college cornerback

## DOWN

- 2 I-back from California
- 3 Homecoming opponent
- 4 Network for NU-Louisiana Tech telecast
- 5 NU's first Outland Trophy winner
- 9 I-back from Mississippi
- 10 Wears No. 13 (offense)
- 13 Quarterback from Illinois
- 14 Wears No. 13 (defense)
- 15 Matt Herian's hometown
- 16 Recruiting coordinator
- 17 Network for NU-USC telecast
- 20 Junior college receiver
- 21 New basketball coach
- 22 High school teammate of Nate Swift
- 23 Wears No. 34 (offense)
- 25 Louisiana Tech's conference affiliation

Answers in Sept. 9 issue



## HUSKERNUTZ



MARION WILL BE HAPPIER THAN MEL WHEN HUSKER FOOTBALL SEASON FINALLY GETS UNDERWAY.

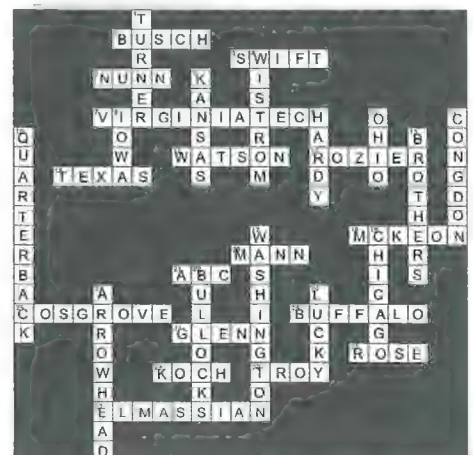
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## Special Attraction

*As it did 36 years ago, USC game could represent a turning point for Nebraska program*



**Mike BABCOCK**

THIS IS ONE OF THOSE where-were-you-when stories, so bear with me. The recollection remains fairly vivid, at least the context does. I had to look up some details. My memory's not that good.

I'm talking about 36 years ago, long before just about every marquee college football game was televised. The radio was my only connection, Lyell Bremser perhaps, though it might well have been Dick Perry or Tom Hedrick or Russ Baldwin. In 1970, all four of them were a voice of the Huskers.

I was in graduate school at Nebraska, in a program to prepare community college English teachers. I would have preferred to be a sports writer, but I had no idea how to go about that.

Anyway, I was playing cards with friends, mostly to pass the time until the Nebraska-Southern California game at the Los Angeles Coliseum. Kickoff was 8 p.m. PDT, 10 in Lincoln.

We continued to play cards until the final whistle, well after midnight.

The game certainly qualified as marquee. USC was ranked third in the Associated Press poll, the same as it had finished the previous season with a 10-0-1 record. Nebraska was ranked ninth, and had won eight consecutive games, following a 17-7 loss at Missouri in early October of 1969.

Coach Bob Devaney's young team in 1969 had lost only one other game, its opener, 31-21 against USC at Memorial Stadium. I was still a student at Chico State College at the time.

I grew up in Nebraska, however, and was a Cornhusker fan. My earliest memories were of Bill Jennings-coached teams that occasionally pulled dramatic upsets but mostly lost.

My first Nebraska game, I think, was a 7-6 victory against Iowa State at Memorial Stadium in 1958. The Cyclones were known as the "Dirty 30" and ran a single-wing offense. A friend's dad drove us to Lincoln from York. We sat in the knothole section beyond the south end zone.

I remember the smell of caramel apples. I don't know why.

So anyway, my affinity for Cornhusker football was well established by 1970, despite three years as a Nebraska expatriate living in northern California—a meaningful distinction in my mind. And the way I figured it at the time, a good showing at USC would serve the Cornhuskers well.

When the game began, I would have settled for a close loss. By the end, I wanted a victory. USC scored with 8:16 remaining for a 21-21 tie. Earlier in the fourth quarter, because of a bad center snap, Paul Rogers missed a 12-yard

field goal that would have given Nebraska a 24-14 lead.

Coach John McKay's Trojans would soon falter, finishing the season 6-4-1 and out of the rankings. Nebraska would win 23 consecutive games and two national championships after that. The USC tie would be the only blemish in a 32-game unbeaten streak. By the time the Cornhuskers lost, I was living in Champaign-Urbana, Ill., and teaching English at Parkland Community College.

I was still keeping track of Nebraska football, however, from afar. And if you're trying to put together a timeline, Bill Callahan would have been a high school student in Chicago.

As I said, bear with me here because I have a point to make, albeit a bit of a stretch if you're not my age or older. To my way of thinking, the USC game in 1970, though a tie, provided Nebraska with a springboard to prominence in the modern era. Devaney's Cornhuskers were national championship contenders in the mid-1960s. But Alabama shattered their dreams twice.

And they had fallen on hard times, in the context created by Devaney, when they finished with 6-4 records in 1967 and 1968, leading to changes that produced back-to-back national titles.

Among those changes was putting a young Tom Osborne in charge of the offense and sending him into southern California to recruit junior college players, particularly linemen.

Osborne was the offensive coordinator the last time Nebraska played the Trojans. Ironically, he had served as a football dorm supervisor in the summer for McKay at USC before returning to Nebraska and essentially walking on to Devaney's first staff as an unpaid graduate assistant in 1962.

Here's another bit of trivia. Johnny Rodgers, the definitive Cornhusker, probably would have gone to USC to play running back, if McKay hadn't considered him too small.

Anyhow, 36 years later, Nebraska again will travel to Los Angeles to play USC, in a game that could represent a turning point in a program that Callahan is working to get back on track.

The Cornhuskers also play defending national champion Texas a little over a month later in Lincoln. A victory in either would be significant, assuming Nebraska takes care of the more mundane business of beating teams it probably should beat. The Longhorns are conference and recruiting rivals, making that game more important. Even so, the USC game has a special attraction for me. Nebraska and USC are among the nation's most tradition-rich programs. And yet they've played only twice ever.

That will make this season's game special. ■



**NU played USC in Lincoln in 1969 and the following year in Los Angeles.**



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